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machine

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MAY 1990

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[part of the GFL]

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The Games machine

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The computer industry's foremost art critic Ms Brigette Van Reuben examines Roger Kean's Apple Macintosh artwork and concludes that the intangible symbolism presumps the intention. Blimey!



How can you take your games tips through to a fan about product for the industry? TQM speaks to the game designer who have made it (page 63).



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It's the first original game from Ocean France - and the medieval chaps come up with the same quality of game as the British. And TOM maddies with the medieval mayhem.

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■ The toughest, steamiest, scale-ups on the console have been played for TOM treatment! Which means making them really easy to kick around on your own. Discover how to kick on page 68

BOOT-UP

IT AIN'T HEAVY



LHX, or Light Helicopter Experiment, is not a helicopter as such. It is a procurement programme initiated by the US Army to find a light attack helicopter for the future. Paul Rigby reveals more about the basis for some forthcoming games

Two competing designs have been chosen up to achieve the LHX contract. The first, known as the First Team, is backed by Sikorsky and Boeing. The second, known as the Super Team, includes Bell and McDonnell Douglas. No actual hardware has been produced besides one or two models and a batch of artist impressions.

It is from this background that Electronic Arts step in with their new flight simulation. Actually, EA's LHX not only simulates the LHX, but also includes the Apache, Blackhawk and the Coyote in its mission arsenal.

Don't be fooled by the PR. EA have not gained access to any secrets, they have not perused secrets in the Whitehouse, and the armed squads and dressed military leaders in EA's offices are just a ruse. What they have done is utilized a very successful

and off-the-shelf scientific process. It's called "guesstwork".

Talking to author Brent Iverson, I asked him which design LHX follows. "Well, we basically went after the McDonnell Douglas one because we thought that one looked cooler." I can just see those army generals. "To test with the specifications? It is kinda cool, we'll have it."

Brent again: "We fixed everything. We assumed they are going to use current weapons, but slightly improved. Actually Brent's admission that he had to make most of the details up is no big deal because the LHX is strictly a paper aeroplane. Even the respective manufacturers are not sure about the details so how are EA expected to know?"

The general idea of the game is that you fly one of four helicopters in one of three theatre spots: East Germany, Vietnam or Libya. Within these

areas there are missions to fly (escort, medevac, covert, etc). You can choose any weapon you think is appropriate for that mission. So for rescue or drop missions you'd be advised to use the Blackhawk or Coyote. For example, Schwarzenegger and intelligent and very fun friends, Hachins (closed light attack choppers), SAMs, etc. There are 12 different missions but they are randomly structured in a similar way to MicroProse's F-19. So there will appear to be more than 12. Afterwards you'll receive medals and commissions if you're successful, including a demerit.

I wanted to create a game where there was a lot of action and it was not difficult to fly. Even so, Brent has included different flight modes for each helicopter, offering a realistic performance, yet without the complexity of control found in a detailed flight sim. In fact, after playing an early version of LHX I formed the impression that the game resembled a helicopter variant of EA's successful Interceptor. Excellent graphics, freedom of play, a variety of absorbing missions, easy to get into but with just enough realism in there to keep you interested. Watch out for a full review of the PC/MSX version (both 386 colour) soon.

Electronic Arts just released Mission Master for the 4.166 file (last available release) in February 1991. The model calculations were not correct which are in played as a full campaign. The one coming with update released as usual past that the first 1991 flying types. They have to work on stability.

SIM CITY TERRAIN EDITOR

Taking full advantage of the success of Sim City, Maxis have produced a terrain editor allowing you to customise the game. Initially, Maxis intended the software to be full of cities, forests, water, the whole thing says you can re-create cities from the past or present, copying the landscape from maps.

Basically, the program is divided into two sections: the random terrain generator and the tile by the painting mode with a smoothing function. The former allows you to select the degree of randomness, via sliders. While the smoothing paint function gives a more realistic view to boundaries. Most of the commands are icons, although there are

keyboard shortcuts. For example, click on Dirt and you can place base with tiles over objects. Channel sets a path that boats can follow in the water. There is also a fire command which looks like large areas with dirt, trees, etc.

In addition, you are able to modify the terrain of your existing cities. In this way you can add and remove a variety of objects, such as trees, water and so on. You can also change the gameplay level and the year of an existing city. While not an essential purchase, the Terrain Editor certainly opens up a number of possibilities.

PAUL RIGBY

© TCM May 1990

, GOOD GAME



■ Well, I thought I had the greatest in Rocky Folger's Flying Cowie show.

introduction of Barbarian. The look-up was equally the first title to show the difference between 16- and 18-bit games. What is probably best remembered about the game is the excellent graphics and animation. Simply, Progression are in touch the follow-up, Barbarian II.

From the looks of things the sequel is going to be faster and more playful than before. A lot more blood is promised.

Garvin Corbett, 28, is the main responsible for designing the graphics and animation in Barbarian. He has been with Progression for five years and has designed the graphics for

Barbarian, Deep Space and much of Zepa. Garvin's role is designing cartoon characters. He starts by feel and outline graphics are his trademark. According to him, the Progression game artist, Garvin also enjoys producing pencil drawings of large intimidating enemies with twisted tongues. Unfortunately, Garvin won't tell us how many off to TQM. It's been almost a year to get Barbarian II to its current level of sophistication. Garvin estimates there will be around 100 hours of animation for the main character alone.

Along with the hack and slay element, Barbarian II will feature a lot of hunting and searching. You'll be able to open chests and pick up extra weapons. It'll even be possible to use your sword and engage in hand-to-hand combat. There will be more enemies to defeat and numerous levels to battle through.

From the pre-release pictures on this page, Barbarian II looks set to be a scorcher.



■ Don't get me in the ultra battle, but I've got the most friends I'll ever have.



■ One more, there's a cheap game to shoot.

THERE'S MORE OVER HERE ▼

Progression have a couple other products in the pipeline. Both are some way off, and the first game names have yet to be decided on. Provisionally the games are called Carthage and Matrix Manulander.

Carthage is mostly the brainchild of Progression graphic artist, Jeff Brant. For the past year Jeff has been concentrating on the game, which is a mixture of strategy and chess racing set in Roman times. The game was originally a new twist on arcade car games, rather than steering it off you'd have a chess with several well-positioned pieces. The programmer got carried away with chess strategy, so there's now a lot of strategy in it.

Matrix Manulander is an arcade strategy shoot-'em-up. The idea being to capture control points in groups of three before the enemy moves in.

Some may say it's a game called Matrix Manulander. Jim Brant is doing some of the art images for the game. Although these images look like digital, they're not. Jim spends hours shading and blending graphics to produce realistic-looking results.



■ After hours of animation showing some enemy characters from Progression's Barbarian II.



■ Greater than Garvin Corbett won't change his face - the main character in Barbarian II will have very big hair.



■ It's more than the graphic quality of Barbarian II. Designing with the computer.



■ Barbarian II is a game to shoot. This time from the forest. The game promises to be faster than before and more more depth.



TOLKIEN TALES

Roleplaying has been just-about-to-take-off in Britain for almost two years now. It's true that few people haven't heard of *The Bard's Tale* series, but how many have actually played one of them? And there's no limit to the choice of role you can play nowadays (from King Arthur to a thief), in fact, it seems everyone is now 'rolling their own'. Interplay, creators of the ubiquitous Bard, have taken a strange step and gone back to grab characters from the most famous adventure of all, Tolkien's *Mobbit*. Marshal M Rosenthal grabbed his magic ring and spoke to head programmer, Troy Miles.

So what is all this Lord of the Rings business anyway? And where is it all going to end?

'First off,' says Miles, 'the game will be subtitled *Fellowship of the Ring*. That's because we're planning a trilogy. In this, the first one, you start as Frodo and are responsible for assembling a party (up to eight), and going off in search of the all-powerful Ring, this adventure is all the way towards the ultimate goal which... without giving the ending away... there is a climatic event which could spell doom to all Middle Earth. This is unlike the book which sort of ends on a quiet note.' (It's also interesting to note that in the book (which actually gives Frodo the Ring, which, of course, little children upon in *The Hobbit*. There's no actual quest for the Ring in the book)... (GM Tolkien Expert.)

'The animation and visual effects occur in the single 'window on the world', wherein you look down upon the characters and landscape in a 3d view of shaded 3-D graphics. You control the leader of the party and can switch at any time to another member,

using the mouse, joystick or keyboard. Going into a building 'removes' the top so you can look inside. Information appears in a window below, as does any interaction with characters. A separate Stat screen presents the current leader and ten control icons for doing various things, such as preparing a weapon for battle (it also shows the picture of the character as well as personal and weapon information).

'Using weapons requires the same skills and situations as in the real world. Eg. you must be up close to wield a sword effectively, although someone with a bow (and arrow can fire from a greater distance.'

Miles points out that Tolkien wasn't big on magic (even though the Ring was full of magical capabilities)... (GM Tolkien Expert). 'But we've added that to this mix by providing spells for the magician to use, plus things of Power. These are special words which cause events to occur, depending on where you are and when you say them.

'Our intention to create a realistic fantasy world precluded us using digitised

images, so don't expect any of that. We do make extensive use of sound though, using the same sampling routines found in our *Demolition*. We also push the Q24 CD chip for all its worth.

'Our biggest objective,' concludes Miles, 'is to give Tolkien fans a run for their money without alienating those who've heard of, but never read, the books. We're creating several large, rich areas — each some 1000x1000 cells large — and filling them not just with those areas expected but also places only hinted at or mentioned by Tolkien, which includes characters as well. We're also randomising elements in the game to keep the player off-guard, even if he's very familiar with the storyline. Since each map can only be accessed from another in specific areas, players should plan on taking a long time to go through it all. After all, hobbits don't move that fast.

You can catch a hint of the Ring — *Fellowship of the Ring* on the PC and CD4 this summer. The concluding volumes, *The Two Towers* and *Return of the King*, should follow in 1991.



■ A scene from the Q24 version. Here Frodo is now wandering around the vast wilderness that makes up Middle Earth.



■ Useful objects can be found in many of the buildings.



■ PC version with 640 graphics boards are in for a real treat with graphics like these.

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CRASH SMASH.

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DOUBLE DRAGON

"Skillful programming has taken the superb graphics and addictive game play of the monster arcade hit and faithfully reproduced it on the home computer."

B-TYPE

"Here at S.U. we think it's about as close to an ultimate space blast as anyone will ever get. fab."

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BLOODY KIDS

Doesn't it? Those Bloody Kids — stars of the riotously funny cartoon strip appearing in Skateboard magazine. The bloodsucking lads are skating their way into the budget market thanks to Smash 16 and Play'n Games.

Armed With Those Bloody Kids is based on the very first strip, created by Skate Mutt's Bear and Beams, in which the three merry pranksters attempt to win a few tickets for the Skate Youth concert from an agent. The agent seen through the prank, but catches if the kids stick up 500 posters for him to give him the tickets. So, off they wile on their skateboards through a skating assault course and on into town whisking up the posters and providing a mid-involving helping hand with other jobs. Check it out at the end of May — \$4.99 for 16-bits and \$2.99 for 8-bits.

RESOLUTION 101

What happens to inner criminals in the future? Do they do community service like weeding DAD's garden? Do they feel? Since the passing of Resolution 101, they've offered a chance to regain their freedom by becoming security hunters. Liberty is gained by assassinating evil criminals who threaten to over-run the city.

Your chance to join the security hunt starts soon as Legend's new games label Millennium releases Resolution 101 — a fast-moving futuristic vehicle simulation containing 3D vectors and sprites to produce a wailing, living city. Track and eliminate your adversaries, cut and salvage the wreckage of your craft. Say your way to freedom. Out soon on the Atari ST, Amiga and PC.



PARADROID 90

Paradroid — it's the game that shook the Commodore world four years ago. Hereon are now creating a super deluxe version for the Atari ST and Amiga called Paradroid 90. The dream crew of a galactic space freighter have turned against their masters. A droid infestation device has been beamed aboard; you must use it to destroy the malicious crew. Explore the five different space stations suspended in the galactic starfield and avoid pirates who are out to destroy you. Paradroid 90 is being programmed by the creator of the original, Andrew Birnbrock, and is due for release in the summer.

DELTA CHARGE!

Blasting onto the Spacey right now is Thalamus's latest space action shoot-'em-up Delta Charge, converted from the original C64 game Delta. Delta Charge is a wild horizontal scroller. The idea is simple: knock anything that comes your way. Collect an assortment of weapons, including the blasma fire weapon, and head into the vicious regions of uncharted space like the Jelly of Dreams (I, Flipper) crazy or what?



TIME SOLDIER

Spring has most definitely sprung — you can tell the gardening lands are hogging the limelight at the moment. Also springing up this month is a new software flower: Blackbeam Software. Don't be surprised if the name sounds familiar; Blackbeam are leading suppliers of arcade machines to the UK. So it's hardly surprising that the first game is a conversion of BMPC's smashing shoot-'em-up Time Soldier.

You must trek through six eras of Earth's history to find five of your comrades — companions — who have been shown throughout time and space — by the evil galaxy conqueror Gylend.

You'll find powerful fighting caverns and dinosaurs in prehistoric times, duelling with ninjas and sea monsters in medieval Japan, up against the last weaponry in World War II and having the right of your life in a future world. Time Soldiers will be out on the Commodore 64, Atari ST and Amiga in April.



OPERATION STEALTH

It's a bomber's hard life when you're a secret agent. Just look at that third chapter, rushing around the world, overthrowing drug-crazed psychotic dictators and indulging in heaps of nupts with recently-rat females! It sounds like the life for you, get out and check Operation Stealth where all that spy malarkey is happening. It's the new game from Dolphin Software, out in May, and is the sequel to the important Future Years.

You play the part of John James, CIA agent, investigating the disappearance of a top-secret

Stealth bomber from the US air force. The bomber is believed to be hidden in Panama where the country's leader, General Managua, has gone from being a benign and respected leader to a, well for it, drug-crazed psychotic dictator!

And what is the involvement of the shadowy crime syndicate Soper? Who knows? Well, no-one. We give you lots of remarkable gadgets and pop off and solve everything. The only clue we're giving is that you can get hold of Operation Stealth soon on the Amiga and Atari ST, price £24.99.



DYNASTY WARS

Second century China was the place to be if you wanted a romp with a bunch of ruthless warlords. You see they're in a punishing

situation with the overthrown Han Dynasty. As luck would have it, out of the fallen Dynasty came four omnipotent warlords who are determined to put the rebels back in their place.

And that's what US Gold's latest conversion of the Capcom coin-op Dynasty Wars is all about. Each of the four warlords have different skills and powers. Each has a horse on which to enter into battle, little simultaneous two-player action and eight challenging battle scenarios. Dynasty Wars sounds a bit of a foot, eh? Well, neither are you.

SNIBBLY DIPPETS

■ Thalamus have signed up their first license. The Ford Rally team have put their seal of approval on the game which features high-speed vector-filled graphics running at a zippy 50 frames a second. Previews soon...

■ All-Time Favorites is a new compilation from US software house Accolade. ST and Amiga owners get Test Drive, Moon 18, Fantastic Games volumes 1 and 2, and Hardhat all in one pack for £29.99. Meanwhile PC and CD-i dark corners get Men, Purr, Kickin' 18, Hardhat, and Test Drive in their packs. £29.99 for PC, peace and a better chaser for CD-i, peace.

■ Gargan news, ahoy! The high price of console software is often one of the reasons that's off putting to a progressive console buyer. This is why

Virgin/Mastertronic distributors of Sega software, have reduced the price on a selected range of Master System product to under a tenner. For £3.99 each you'll be able to get Enduro Rider, Ninja Master Mission, Super Tennis, Teddy Boy and Transal. And for £12.99 each there's Action Fighter, Action Adventure, Fantasy Zone, Global Defence, Secret Command and World Grand Prix.

■ Froese kicks off its cheapo 16-bit range with Battleship, Star Warriors and Beyond The Ice Palace all coming in at £3.99. Originally released on the Atari label at double the price, ST and Amiga owners can see a new Battleship in at the end of April, with Star and Ice Palace entering the shops in early May.

■ Avoid that spaghetti computer task with

Spektronic's new IR infrared joystick — goodbye jumbles of wires! The joystick is supplied with a control box to plug in the back of the computer. Infrared signals sent from the stick are picked up by the control box. Operating with a range of 30 feet, the IR is out in April costing £29.99.

■ The Unofficial Guide To The Best Games is a forthcoming book from Grove Press (01 438 6910) and details some of the best games available for the ST, Amiga and PC. Priced at £2.99 it's a bit steep, but you are provided with a £3 money-off voucher for any Monopoles, Random or Pinland product.

SHADOW WARRIOR

Look out — there's a ninja about! Popping up this time in Ocean's latest retro conversion of the Techno arcade machine Shadow Warrior. Travel the streets of modern day New York basking the living daylights out of seemingly endless gangs of evil ninjas. "It's a shoot-'em-up with shoes!" proclaims Shadow

Warrior programmer Mike Tolbot of Teque.

It's the graphics which are the main attraction in Shadow Warrior. There are two megabytes in the original coin-op; Teque are trying to cram as much as possible into the computer conversion. Out for an Easter release from Ocean on all major formats,

ORIENTAL GAMES

Hipster Eastwood! It's a ninja, and it's looking like he's off to the Oriental Games. Indeed he is — it's a martial arts fighting game from Microstyle featuring three beat 'em up styles: kung fu, karate and hoosyle.

"But... because the nation, we've had enough ninjas games!"

It's just as well, then, that the programmers have come up with something a bit innovative. It's all to do with the control method. You can create the moves through a joystick, edit by preprogramming each directional push with a special move, or keep together a load of actions which are triggered by one joystick movement. For example, with one directional thrust your player could perform a high kick followed by a forward kick to get behind his opponent, turn around and then deliver a back-kicking roundhouse kick to the back of the head! Try that in Exquisite Fish and leave your joystick unarranged!

This programming element allows greater strategy to be used when playing the game against the 20 different challenges. And as each opponent uses a unique combination of moves, you need all the help you can get. Through Oriental Games was developed for the 16-bit

machine, Microstyle are releasing 8-bit versions. Sadly, though, there isn't a joystick editor in the 8-bit game. Aaaa. Making up for that... there's an additional event included, 'fat-sapper'... er, some wrestling. Turn to page 20 and try your hands and feet at the Oriental Games competition.



INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING

Get yer Gracery on the Amiga! As everyone knows Gracery are the leading experts on the rough and tumble sport of wrestling. They yell at the screen! They wave their bottles in the air! They shout the best 'un that's don!' the dirty on the little one with their handbag! Fun packed family entertainment indeed. And it's all being faithfully translated by Hawaiian who are releasing international



Championship Wrestling in April for the wallpaper price of £24.99!



F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER

If you're keen waiting for a number 13 has a long, arduous process, you're so keen what 16-bit flight simulators have been going through for over a year. Now, 14 months after the PC version, Microprose's F-19 Stealth Fighter is just about ready for release on the ST and Amiga.

A sleek, low-profile operation is the name of the game with you, talking out of the rear radar-invisible fighter. Zooming into enemy territory, taking out targets and making it back safely takes skill and courage. Progress is hard — but one day you might just make the grade to take on the ultimate-risk Central Europe scenarios.

COMPUTER ARENA 90

Since 1988 there has been a regular event held in foreign lands called Computer Arena. It's not a fancy show, it's not an international trade show — but a conference where leading lights from the European software industry spend a weekend thinking and deciding where it's all going. This year everyone who's anyone flew to Malta for the four day event held between the 16th and 19th of March. Don't get it wrong! RICHARD DODD was one of the delegates.

Thursday 15 March
Heathrow Airport departure lounge, 10.00pm. Boarded Air Malta plane, checking the thought of three and a half hours in flight. Plan from Queen's Gate to Malta, the Liverpool PC screen shots for the football special (two page-16) and photocopies with a three and a half hour presentation of Frank Sedgewick. Arrive Malta 2.00am dead time. 3.30 am — enter bedrooms, discover small workbooks and give it a trendy pose with rolled up copy of TQM, go to bed.

Friday 16 March Malta
Hilton, lunchtime-in. Throw dead cardboard out the window and head off for conference number one. The speeches kick off with Activision boss Raffi Casanova summarising the software industry in 20 minutes. Talks at a rate of snide, slides appear and disappear in seconds. First point requests a transcript of the speech to read later as British only so much as Irish can cope with.

Bob Hay of the Federation

Against Software Theft (AST) speaks next with very promising news. The anti-piracy campaign which has been running for the last six months has had a good effect, resulting in many piracy organisations taking unreserved and bounded. FASIT now has additional staff and, with more support coming from software trade body BSMA, is looking to recruit another member of staff to concentrate on games software piracy. Currently most of FASIT's work is devoted to the business sector. Bob announced the launch of a new anti-piracy advertising campaign which you can be sure TQM is supporting.

Next came a topical debate — Alan Miller of MGT, creators of the latest Britain computer the SAM Coupe — on A Lingering Death of the 16-bit. He made the point that too much emphasis is currently being put on new technology the ever expanding 16 — and 32 — bit power market. He wonders if things are really getting better with the advent of more powerful computers because hardware and software costs are getting higher. Alan stated that rather than producing an expensive 32-bit machine, which would be a mistake of the future and beyond anyone's price point, inter-ent with the SAM Coupe was in development of 16-bit technology — making an 8-bit micro look and sound the same as a 16-bit. Effectively producing a computer for today's users at an affordable price. Well, the debate raged on... but what do you reckon —

the letters pages are open to your views.
Saturday March 17: Going to the nightclub was a mistake. Began industry chums for dragging me there against my wishes and forcing statements upon me. Harriet. Amongst today's topics was software, which I read under companies and consoles in a speech made by Nick Alexander of Virgin/Masterbyte who distribute the Mega Master System and soon the Mega Drive. With already 215,000 Master Systems in the UK, it's



■ From left to right, Richard Dodd (left) and Dave Marshall from Amiga Action looking on the last event, etc. Note too — following the effect of 1989 to the 16-bit market. Also.

now boom time for the consoles. Nick expects that by the end of the year there'll be 700,000 Master Systems across Europe and 100,000 Mega Drives.

The other major speech was an update on the trade organisation BSMA, which stands for the European Leisure Software Publishers Association. Formed at last year's Arena it was set up to promote and help the software industry. The main point the

year was about the software charts, compiled by Gallup. Some people feel there is a problem at the moment with the way charts are put together and not accurately portraying what's selling. BSMA are keen to improve the system so that everyone, including the publishers, can make the most of them. Of course this will cost money, but if everything goes to plan, we could see some exciting developments coming through. Saturday night at Arena means Gala dinner — the only time in the year where the software industry looks smart, wearing gowns and day-glo hairnets for dinner jackets and black ties. It was a lot with TQM writer Bob Goucher and Dennis and Mark of Dorset providing the entertainment. And then 10pm the backdrop of 8 at 10 is the nightclub for some more serious discussion. About

Sunday 16 March, 2.00pm is not a suitable time to return from a nightclub when one has to be in conference four hours later listening to David Price of Commodore talking about where the ST and Amiga are going. And, as you'll be pleased to know, they're both doing very well. Especially in the leisure market shown by the fact that the Amiga 60000 is back for outside the Amiga educational pack at Christmas. And apart from another saying advice about that 1989 programme and getting a software shop on the TV that about closed it up for the Arena conference. It's all happening again next year — but until then let's go portable.

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CAPSTONE CAPERS

It's always an exciting time when a new software company is announced. Who are they? What are they doing? And, more importantly, how are they going to impress us with their new ideas? Marshall M Rosenthal tracked three time zones to visit Capstone, part of the gigantic Intracorp conglomerate, and discovered two innovative licenses...

Tom Clancy's latest novel, *Cardinal of the Kremlin*, has already topped the best-sellers list and looks set to become one of his most successful books to date. So successful that, like *Hunt for Red October* and *Red Storm Rising*, it too is being transformed into a computer game.

And if history is anything to go by, we could soon be seeing a film tie-in (*Hunt for Red October* is currently in post-production at Paramount), with Sean Connery in the lead role and even a boardgame (*Red Storm Rising* is selling well as a T&A tabletop).

His books bring together high-tech and high adventure. Few other authors mix industry, law, the average reader the myriad of weapons, terms, situations and battle stations that the modern armies of the world use to communicate and fight with. And that includes the East as well as West.

Cardinal of the Kremlin deals with the most potent of SDI, or Star Wars as it has (affectionately) become known. Regardless of whether you believe in killer satellites and lasers that can fire at them and deflect off to destroy enemy bases, it makes for a good read.

And one that Capstone Programming Systems have picked up on and exploited to the max. David Turner is the director of the newly-formed company.

"Our version of *Cardinal* is based on creating a SDI program from scratch, while frustrating the Russians in their attempt to do the same," he begins.

"On the technical end, we're competing the programming on IBM systems (Amiga version to follow) — which will give IBM customers in USA, an edge in microchips. We also make use of digitized sounds, using the Real Sound system designed by Acoustic systems, as well as the specialized AD-Lib board (with 30 minutes of

original music).

"The game is totally devoted to scheming. The main screen is composed of the American side (which you play) and the Russian (computer AI). Using icons, you choose the scientists who will develop your SDI program, implement policy, set security and plan sequences.

Keep in mind that the more the security, the less chance of a Russian mole getting information. However, the work

the Americans and rush their own systems into completion.

"Then it might be time to bring up your ally, the KGB — who is leading his forces in Afghanistan, where the Russian SDI base is located. You won't see him until you order a nail in the East, but you've got to keep him in supplies and informed until that point."

One of the books brings up the Presidential Review — which not only shows how you're doing, but also the status in the Kremlin (or at least whatever your informants have found out).

What's most important is that the game really relies heavily on the audio sequences. Thinking is important, but doing counts for a lot. "Violence? Limited and not going to commit in the name of National Defense. But fast,

they will come true than they could possibly imagine...

Mafia, this hip cat from hundreds of years in the future, comes back to help the boys for all of civilization is to be patterned by their music they'll create. Come prepare though, if they flame history they won't graduate and their career will be over. De Mafia builds a time machine which will help them travel back in time.

Without giving too much away (the film and video have already been released in the States), the game figure it would be quite a while to bring back some of the deal duces to impress the teachers. You can imagine the complications this creates.

With so many films steeped forward and back in time, the game will have to be pretty accurate to be a successful translation. "Absolutely," he says. "I have digitized pictures directly from the film as 'bridges' between scenes, and the actual voices of our heroes will be sampled."

We've also added a few bells besides animated graphics. For one thing, even though Mafia provides a telephone directory (for time area), not every number is valid.

"Not every person found can be brought back. Firstly, because only few others can be trusted back to the telephone booth (and left in the nearby shopping mall), and second because some of these guys want you to get some object for them before they'll cooperate. So you have to go hopping at over time."

Provided you get enough of these clues back, there's still the task of handling them all at once from the mall and handing them over to the school.

Whatever mission found is cartoon-like, says Turner. "It's where handwaving as much as possible to keep the game fresh and fun, and not that can be finished successfully in one or two hours."

The major questions still in development are twofold: will the player control both Bill and Ted together as a unit or separately, and will we get a chance to hear any of their fabulous WUG-Ballen rock 'n' roll?

Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure is currently touring the top cinema screens, and the game will probably follow in June.



As they're old, they're wise, they're cool, they're the only and real Bill and Ted fans ever live a life-changing game that Capstone. Get your guide these fans to the top of the game!

will progress at a much slower rate, due to the restrictive atmosphere.

Turner points out the each scientist (male and female) comes complete with their own dossier, including digitized photographs. "The effects of different people change each time as the game starts fresh and unexplored every time. The average completion time is over two hours."

While a project is in the development stages, it's best to continuously test the equipment and ensure it works. The best target to blow up is a drive satellite. "We're trying to get digitized images of these in as well," enthuses Turner. Meanwhile the Russians continue on their path to thwart

reflexes are so important as making quick decisions.

"Though *Cardinal of the Kremlin* may not surprise too many people — we've all seen strategy games before — Capstone's other releases is sure to raise a few eyebrows.

BILL AND TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE

It's camp, wit, nuts and reality camp. It's a movie about two average dudes at a Californian high school. Their names? Bill and Ted. Their world? Sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. Well, the rock 'n' roll bit's true. For Bill and Ted have formed a rock group, with which they hope to influence the world. And their dreams

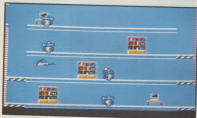
GREAT WIZARD IS ABOUT TO DIE

GAUNTLET 7800

Bob Arneson, just one of US Gold's in-house programmers, is finishing work on an Atari 7800 console version of Gauntlet. Bob has already written a 7800 game called Tower Toppler. You're probably more familiar with the UK computer game name: Nebulus.

Although Tower Toppler hasn't appeared in this country — due, presumably, to the fact that the 7800 hasn't been marketed particularly well over here — there are about two million consoles in the States and demand for games is great.

Early 1990 development kit comprised of a Mega CD running Atari's proprietary compilation: 80004800 assembler, load from 161 in 7800 RAM cartridge, and downloading software. While the system doesn't have any bells and whistles, it is reliable and features everything necessary for development.



■ Mega cartridges can hold 128K of information. The Impossible Mission code will be about 10K in length, the graphics a further 6K or 7K and the compiled sound another 2K.



■ Also getting in on the Sega action is French software house Taito with Fire and Forget II — a mean old shooting game, exactly your way round.



■ Gauntlet on the Sega. A great job at conversion featuring ultra-realistic two player action, over 100 levels and highest score. Its major catch is on the screen in Gauntlet, the characters don't flicker and the gameplay stays fast.



■ Another Gauntlet game is Atari 88 Gold's forthcoming conversion of Gauntlet for the Mega System.

Smashing into a Sega 8-bit console war you may soon see US Gold's starting conversion of Gauntlet. What? Four years after the game has been out on all other machines? Fused so.

Gauntlet is among several classic titles being converted for the Sega by the Birmingham-based software conglomerate over the next few months. Impossible Mission, Paperboy and Indiana Jones are among the other games promised.

Gauntlet on the Sega looks set to blow away all other 8-bit versions of the game. The scrolling is fantastically smooth, it makes the 8-bit a sweet look. Even in simultaneous two-player mode, when there are

countless enemy monsters on screen, there is no apparent reduction in game speed. Stay a while... stay forever! Unforgettable words from an unforgettable game. A game you are about to see and hear very shortly if you've got a Sega Master System. US Gold have got in-house programmer Gary Priest converting the classic Impossible Mission onto Sega format. According to Gary, the gameplay will be very similar to the Commodore 64 version. 'I don't want to change the game too much as the original was liked by everyone.' Naturally Impossible Mission on the Sega will boast improved graphics and more colour.

TOYS 'R' US

One month it's the Consumer Electronics Show, the next New York's international Toy Fair. There's no rest for Marshall M. Rosenfield as he takes across America to bring all the news from America's latest home entertainment convention.

You may think that the recent Earle Court Toy Fair in London was the biggest thing since the Barbie doll, but this isn't true. The real action men amongst you should be seen hanging out in Manhattan, New York. For it is here, in the towering Toy Centre, that the world's top traders got together to play games, and make money.

Just getting from one floor to the next is an adventure, even Indiana Jones would back off from. But the rewards can be great, because there's some amazing stuff to be found. So lets take Tanka Truck and plough into the heaving masses to see what can be picked up in the next few months.

Tiger Electronics have taken this to the max, with a long line of LCD hand-helds (R15), featuring great sound and multi-level action. There's *Archie*, *Jackie Chan*, *Double Dragon II*, *The Simpsons*, *Alien vs. Beast* and many more. The pick of the bunch, though, has to be *Strider*. Whether you're new or

Fight through four levels of action. Each is overseen by seven vicious enemies, with special last-encounters and, of course, an appearance by the Joker himself.

Also catching the (streamed) eye is *American Gladiators*. The syndicated US television show (you're familiar: it national event) combines the best, if you can call it that, of wrestling and music videos. All this is linked together with bizarre details in terms of names, via the video.

Here also (in perhaps recommended) are the LG3 videogame machines (complete with analog and time functions). One handy addition, missing from most of the popular earlier ones, is a second control button. Available writings (pc) are: *Mirko Gordon, Batman, Double Dragon, Xenon's Quest* (Cassette), *R. Robotino*, and *Interplanetary Challenge*. The *Disk Tracy* watch (of the film) is also in production. Be ready to see every imaginable item based around *Conan* as new

microfla, from Minto and
Soga; garnet: lo-pollin; and
silica: mica.

THEM THE

which brings us to Tiger's new talking hard-hats. Game Talk (RCA), back of the four games, features an incredibly lifelike synthesized voice that guides the player through each phase, offering advice and warnings. The new tips include two sports games, Sugar Ray Leonard's Talking Boxing and *Chiller Challenge*.

City to measure progress and there's the safeguard to some of the most popular games of this season. *Game Exports* 11

shape of the arcade game, complete with working steering wheel/pedal and gun/arrow controls? Well, you prepare to drive the **Automate (2000)** Tiger's placing a LCD driving game within the shell of a true replica of the vehicle.

At least these feel long, dark, black and plastic, this is bound to satisfy those who couldn't raise the \$14,000 you'd need to build one for yourself. Similar to *Our Man*, it also has a steering wheel (flat-top, of course), and a gear lever. Only the shell has been built at present. You'll have to wait a few months before you can actually "drive" it.



contains 20 different stages, ten common and 10 special tokens. The tokens supply a range of qualities, from simple power-ups to extra fire power.

In the final talking hand-to-hand game, Snake is Keweenaw, plus much deeper in mindless nuclear war, and save the world.

Tiger continued to promote *Esquimaux* from two half-plus (at half) and afterburners with featured lead copy inside the



CHIPS WITH
EVERYTHING

It's all microchips nowadays. And the single most useful chip has to be that of sound. Progress through the end of the Eighties and into the Nineties has been impressive, with the single-channel tape and false robotic voices being gradually flattened by the lush *Go Mad!* voices and their built-in electronic sniffs.

■ **Really your champion?** Look, it's the Boston (66-64) **Warrior** to take the 100th anniversary of the Treaty... (in 1900?)



humming in the mouthpiece to one of six brass instruments. It sounds authentic and looks really cool as it's got a high-tech shape and full gold finish.

Also rounding out two Worlds of Wonder with their Jammer (\$129). This has got to be the most sophisticated, playable electronic guitar on the Toy Fair. This is no toy, though. It has five different guitar accompaniments for the background. Add to that digital representations of guitar (bells and riffs), keyboard and percussion. Due to the built-in harmonics — controlling both left and right — you never sound pre-programmed. Any if you fancy using them in a group (Robert Carlyle, where are you?) you can connect two up together, and play them both into an amplifier. Mounted in a sleek black and gray body, this is just the thing for all those budding musicians. There's even plug-in MIDI ports for additional background tunes.

And then there's Sound FX (\$24) from Matsui, the ultimate simulated sound device. Each of the four dials to the wheel and deliver a range of pre-programmed sounds.

FIGHTER CARS

Take the mini go-kart system used in advanced F-16 fighter planes and turn it to a really GOOD use. That's exactly what

TOY MONEY

Price alone are US dollars. Although, most will probably reach the US shores, and certainly receive a price hike too. For instance, the Nike Hobbie we mentioned last year at £29 were imported by Mainline into the UK and sold at around £30.



HEADS ON YER BEGS

You'll move off from electronics for just a moment. Leave it to Milton Bradley to show the world how to battle the Red menace. Unbelievably, they've come up with the Goofy-Gee Game — though, not quite the aggressive Commerce-busting boardgame you might expect from us parents.

Worlds of Wonder have done with their GT Super Screeners (\$189) aces set. Gone are the days of attaching your cars to the metal strips, or passing the target ball off too it keeps shooting the circuit, now you just throw your car back on the black slide. And pushing the likes of SonicStar and F104 Super Screeners also has 'realistic' racing sounds! On the cars screen set around the track, this also means that each car can be manoeuvred around the other. In fact they'll stay on the circuit by themselves, with no steering (until you push the trigger and slip on the gas, so make that steering). The standard set comes with two cars and 20 feet of nine-inch-wide track.

Just as fun, and also lightweight, is Mattel's Ace of Hearts Line Rider (\$19) set. Their slotless cars can be used anywhere because they're

simple.

Take turns trying to wiggle through paths, Japanese cameras and blue jeans in this wacky board game of Victory Through Luxury Items. And, yes, the game was actually shown to Mr G himself before it was let loose on the street. It's a real foot, and a fine example of making capitalists pay off. The only competition to it might be Electronic Matt. Mattel's electronic features compete to make purchases while moving throughout a 3-D representation of the most hallowed place. No dice, everything is announced by a synthesized mall announcer. As for

money, well there are credit cards (what else?) and bank accounts (just waiting to be used). The winner is the most cost-effective player.

Kicker game are always a good investment, so why not go ahead of Mattel's Kickstart. Now, too, can play ropes and robbers, or measure that football you've been bragging about. This great little gadget will measure objects moving at up to 100 mph. Very useful.

After night days of keeping little goodness around like Toy Fair, all it needs now is a good supply of batteries for even the little things. Next stop, Tandy.



radio-controlled. But with a difference, as they 'test' for the track below them using a contact sensor.

Basically, the track can be made on any smooth surface, and most cars test it back line on a wider floor for vice-grip (or about okay). Mattel's even realize is that the car will back out the track if it gives off — you don't have to put it back on the line. And, of course, the cars

can also be used as standard remote.



Wired, babyface — a couple of kiddies pretending to illustrate how skilled they are to playing GT Super Screeners. Games.

GET TOUGH, MEAN AND ORIENTAL!

WIN A LOAD OF MARTIAL ARTS LESSONS FROM MICROSTYLE PLUS: WATCHES! SHADES! POSTERS AND HEAPS MORE!

No, not martial arts! Martial arts! Which are quite different... maybe not. Anyway, this contest is most definitely about martial arts and specifically those played in Microstyle's latest teacher, Oriental Games.

Oriental Games takes you off to the Far East to compete in a gruelling series of games played with the masters. Kick through Kung Fu, fight in Freestyle, clobber in Karate and slap the fat in Sumo-wrestling. But rather than being just another beat-'em-up, the ST, Amiga and PC versions feature a joystick editor allowing you to select the moves that can be achieved by moving the joystick. Check the preview in BookUp! for the full story.

COR, WISH I COULD DO THAT! And even, with a bit of luck and thanks to Microstyle, you could be up to the standard required to compete in Oriental Games: we're offering a set of ten martial arts lessons as the first prize! The lucky, and soon to be deadly, winner gets ten lessons paid for at their local centre in which ever oriental discipline they choose! It's a prize and a half! And the other half is a Microstyle goody parcel with featuring a watch, sunglasses, a flask, a credit-card wallet, posters and a t-shirt! And nine more bundles of goodies for runners-up!

To be in with a chance of winning one of the prizes on offer there's a wordsearch to solve. Search out the 10 Oriental Games words, which may be written up, down, across or diagonally, ring them and post the coupon along with your name and address to: **NEWFIELD, ORIENTAL GAMES COMPO, 70M, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1JH**. Entries by May 15. Anything received after that will be forwarded to Richard Eddy.

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E	U	T	N	E	A	T	K	T	S	K
L	F	R	N	E	R	S	T	C	E	C
Y	G	E	L	A	I	O	S	I	E	I
T	H	S	M	Y	M	R	Y	A	F	T
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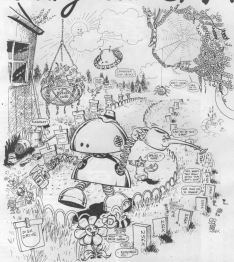
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THERE'S A NEW GUY IN TOWN



It's now getting to be a regular occurrence: 'New wonder computer/console from Japan upstages everything released before it.' No sooner than you've set your sights on one machine than a better one appears. The latest development from the Land of the Rising Sun promises to be the last word in home computer entertainment, well for the next few months at least. Robin Candy takes a look at Fujitsu's FM Towns machine.

The name Fujitsu may call for instantly familiar to most home-computer users but they did in fact build the first computer ever made in Japan — over 52 years ago! Today they're the world's biggest manufacturer of computers, as well as one of the top manufacturers of communications systems. The FM Towns machine is Fujitsu's first foray into the computer "retail" market and sales set to establish them as a market leader almost overnight.

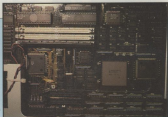
The machine itself doesn't actually offer anything new in terms of technology. It is, in fact, a PC. So what makes it such a groundbreaking machine? Well, for starters it's the first PC built with CD-ROM as standard, rather than treating it as another peripheral. It's got a super-fast 32-bit 80386 central processor and amazing graphics capabilities.

The technical specifications make it look like a high-powered business machine — something you'd initially expect from Fujitsu — but even in Japan it's clearly aimed at the home market (of course it can run PC business packages). Games are already available, and with Fujitsu touting the machine around top software houses like Polygram, Microsoft (Dungeon Master has already been converted) and Electronic Arts, expect more to follow.

POWER WITHOUT THE PRICE

A basic FM Towns machine costs approximately £1000 (excluding any import taxes and the normal European price hike). A bit steep you may think (but just look at what you get: a high resolution monitor, a CD-ROM unit (which can also be used as a normal CD player), 16Mb RAM, a 10in 3.5-inch disk drive and a 80085 processor (80085 machines are currently the PCs to own and normally cost around £2000). The top-of-the-range machine costs approximately £2000 and includes an additional 40Mb internal hard disk drive, another 16Mb 3.5-inch disk drive and an extra 1Mb of RAM.

The built-in CD-ROM unit is the heart of the machine. A single CD is capable of storing up to 540Mb of data, more than enough for any program. But you're not confined to storing just program data on CD; you can also store music, which opens up the possibilities for a truly professional sounding, interactive, synchronised game soundtrack (Cineaste will be first). As the processor controls the CD-ROM it can move the laser to any sector of the CD. In practice terms this means that at any stage of a game the computer can skip to and play the appropriate part of the soundtrack.



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE: Model 1P £1200 (1Mb RAM, one disk drive), 2P £1500 (2Mb RAM, two disk drives), 1H £1900 (16Mb RAM, two disk drives, 200Mb internal hard disk), 2H £2000 (32Mb RAM, two disk drives, 400Mb internal hard disk). All prices are based on Japanese list prices at current exchange rates.

CPU: 80386 with an optional 80387 coprocessor.

RAM: Supermodel 16Mb.

GRAPHICS DISPLAY MODES: 640x480 pixels (256 colours onscreen, 16,777,008-colour palette).

640x480 pixels (16 colours onscreen, 4096-colour palette).

640x480 pixels (16 colours onscreen, 4096-colour palette).

320x240 pixels (the entire 32,768-colour palette can be displayed onscreen — just).

320x240 pixels (the entire 32,768-colour palette can be displayed onscreen).

SPEEDED: 16x16 pixel pattern (16- or 256-colours from a palette of 32,768), 880

simultaneous sprite patterns, 1024 sprites under simultaneous control.

SOUND: Stereo PCM, eight channels with a sampling frequency of 19.2KHz and stereo, four-operator FM with six channels.

STORAGE: One or two 1Mb 3.5-inch floppy disk drives, 504Mb CD-ROM, 20 or 40Mb internal hard disks (models 1H and 2H only).

EXPANSION SLOTS: three (model 1P), two (all other models).

CARD SLOTS: modem, SCSI, video.

OPERATIONS: 180mm (x) x 325mm (y) x 400mm (z).

WEIGHT: 11kg.



As shown it is ready to play games. The FM Towns machine shows the direction that computers will be going in the 1990s: fully integrated unit. The FM Towns delivers what other computers have aspired to. Whether it's for playing games or doing a small business the FM Towns is the machine to own.

SOUND'S GOOD TOO

Not that Fujitsu have skimped in the sound chip department, the FM Towns is capable of eight channels of sampled sound and six channels of FM-synthesised sound (the same sound synthesis techniques used by many popular makes of synthesiser re-lead). The end result are soundtracks and sound effects which are truly mindboggling. If you're musically minded, the FM Towns could easily become the focus of your music set up. A MIDI interface can be added into the one of the expansion ports on the back of the machine while software packages such as *PowerSound* and *Equity* allow you to program the built-in sound chip, score music and control MIDI devices. If sound chip programming isn't your cup of tea there's a built-in sound sampler which allows you to create your own wacky sounds in a matter of seconds.

If your interests are more graphical, the FM Towns is still the machine to go for. Depending on which display mode is selected the FM Towns can display up to 32,768 colours simultaneously, while in another of its display modes there's a colour palette comprising of over 16 million colours and 40 shades. Add an optional video card and you can turn NTSC video signals (just with an American-made machine) into digital displays, turn digital displays into video or even superimpose graphics over video images. Fujitsu have already released an easy-to-use art program (*Comment*) designed to exploit the different display modes.

The FM Towns machine has a lot to offer games that look, sound and play just the most original graphics packages that free you from the constraints of 16 colours and music capabilities that put other home computers to shame. The end result is a computer which can perform any function the home user could possibly want. The complete home entertainment centre is built.



Not the worst image for the FM Towns version of *Afterburner*. Not only is the graphics best game for the machine is almost as good.



GAMES WITHOUT FRONTIERS

Currently there are approximately 35 games titles available for the FM Towns, with many more in the pipeline (including *Sub Machine* and *Indiana Jones - The Grapnel Adventure*). One of the first to appear was *Afterburner*. Previous incarnations of the popular game were disappointing, the 16-bit versions were generally unplayable and the only 32-bit version of merit was for the Amstrad. Enter the FM Towns machine and what you've got is a re-processed, state-of-the-art graphics and sound the game and gameplay every bit as good as the arcade original. With the FM Towns there's no knowing what's going to happen next.

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The Games machine



Wired effects, graphics, sound effects, and gameplay statistics — Version page 48

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Something bad is breeding on Xelos...

INFESTATION

Kal Salar is one of the leading agents for the Interplanetary Federation; an aggressive, unrepentant man committed to restoring law, peace and order to the galaxy. But even such a resourceful, quick-witted man as he could not have prepared for the instrumental task he has been given: an vermin extermination mission in the Alpha 8 colony on Xelos, 4th moon of planet CX-006.

The colony was constructed to house a secret scientific research group, from which they could observe the bizarre conditions on CX-006. The surface is a thin layer of ice, translucent in places, and believed to encompass a life-supporting sea of gas. The gas leaks out from between cracks in the ice and forms a pink aura around CX-006.

Changes observed both above and below the ice led the scientists to the conclusion that the benign world supported intelligent life, and they regularly beamed reports back to Earth on their findings and theories. The reports came in for nine months, measuring progress... But then the reports became scientific, distorted beyond recognition or interrupted by bursts

of static. After two weeks of unclear transmissions, the reports stopped completely.

The last report revealed loss of alien's sating of the scientists and disrupting the central computer, making it hostile to humans. The air had become more and more poisonous and what appeared to be eggs had been laid. The last few seconds of the report were a frantic plea for help.

As the game begins, you, as Kal agent Salar, are already on the alien's surface of Xelos and above the underground complex where the Alpha 8 colony is, or rather was, held. You have a first-person view of events, looking out from a helmet; you're inside a spacecraft, with built-in computer detection and defense systems (with heads-up display) and jet pack. Your first task is simply to enter the colony but just this required effort—you have to log-on to begin the exploration mission and find the access lift, fighting off sentry droids on the way, and many of the suit's capabilities need to be used to do this.

The removable helmet has four gauges essential to your survival, arranged around the inside of its visor. The oxygen supply in your tanks is the most important; tell your

temperature, either particularly high or low, can have a detrimental effect on health and rate of oxygen intake. You're likely to be exposed to lots of radiation in the course of your search, and so a dose age should be kept on this to avoid it building up to fatal levels. And for basic navigation, there's a compass, which points to the moon's magnetic north.

The helmet's HUD can produce seven types of information, each accessed from the numeric keypad and appearing in form of your vision, but not obscuring it. The first display is for navigation and shows the level you're on, coordinates of your exact location and your bearing. Status shows number of life made, time elapsed since start of mission, operation mode (discovery or tactical), eggs remaining (begins at 187) and whether any supplies have been dropped at the moon's rim, destroyed by the dragoons; inventory shows what's being carried and how many crystals gas refills you have, and the support traces your heartbeat and monitors food and medication levels. The scratch pad's where notes can be typed in for later reference, and atmospheric analysis shows



ION

PSYCHOSIS



■ The heads-up display (helmet profile) is view into the visible world. Here it displays relevant navigation details to help you find your way through the vast, featureless void.

refuel level and gas content of your current location. Assistance comes into play when you use the jet-pack or MMU (Manned Maneuvering Unit) and displays an artificial horizon, fuel level, velocity and altitude. Slightly simply shown where your pulse rate is being aimed.

As you explore the rooms and corridors of the complex (providing you get down there in the first place), closed doors separating them, various features and objects (see box) are discovered. Shuttles can take you safely from A to B, while the ventilation tunnels allow you to reach otherwise inaccessible areas, but going in alone and you need to find something to remove the gases covering the shafts. Radiation areas should be passed through as quickly as possible, to avoid overdose, so if there's a network terminal in such a region you'd

better work fast. Network terminals are linked to the central computer and provide lots of handy information, best of which are maps, which can be zoomed in and out at.

The locations of alien eggs are marked on maps and the elimination of these is the primary objective of each level. When an egg is found, it's a simple case of releasing a gas cartridge (making sure your helmet's on) tap "kill" it and prevent the hatching of another alien.

Ultimately you must find the power source for the complex and close the reactor to flow, triggering the destruction of the planet, the eggs, aliens and their mother. Of course, escaping from the moon before it goes critical would also be quite a good thing.

Infestation lacks originality in both its design and execution, but this has little

GAME INFESTATION
PRODUCER PSYCHOSIS
VERSIONS
AMIGA £24.95
ATARI ST £24.95

AMIGA

88%

In a really neat intro, an astronaut jets through space in fast, realistic perspective before landing on Xelos. The tiled 3-D of the game is generally plain but is detailed in places and moves at speed, albeit a little jerky. The helmet graphics are well drawn and suitably hi-tech and although music is pretty cliché and MOR, the theme, Darth Vader-like breathing when the helmet is in position is excellent.



■ With a scenario that takes the player into the alien and alien-planet Psygnosis offers some of the most fun you can have.

bearing on the content and value of this exciting arcade adventure. A lone, lone soldier tentatively exploring unfamiliar territory, knowing that there're bad aliens hiding somewhere in the shadows, maybe just around the next corner, is an old idea. An arcade adventure's giving first-person perspective in tiled 3-D, with things to shoot and objects to collect and use, is an old idea. But in *Infestation*, the plot, graphics and gameplay form a cohesive, quality product of high-entertainment value.

Helmet graphics surrounding the playing area create the appropriate, enclosed, claustrophobic atmosphere when combined with the rasping breath sound — you often can't wait to get your helmet off and the freedom that allows. But you can't do that in many places, unless you want to meet an early grave. It's very important to keep an eye on all the gauges.

Peeking around corners of later levels is non-rewarding — you can never tell when a caterpillar-like alien is going to jump out and run for you. Being able to look out and down helps increase the realism of exploration and adds to the tension. There's plenty of rooms and objects to find, and then you've got to puzzle out how to use them and what to use them on — a sometimes difficult task.

Infestation is a game of great atmosphere and depth, and lets you discover what it's like to be an intergalactic Herkules man!

Marion Lagworth

EQUIP YOURSELF

Although there are many objects to find and utilize in the Alpha II complex, some are more useful than others...

- **Compass** Shows your exact position in the area immediately surrounding you.
- **Infrared scanner** There are some things important to success and survival that are invisible to the naked eye. The scanner reveals this world and makes them come clear.
- **Keys** For true freedom in Alpha II, key-cards are necessary to open certain doors and operate lifts and shuttles.
- **Prime oxygen** Unless you work very quickly, the supply you begin with won't be enough as oxygen levels must be found.
- **Batteries** Your sophisticated suit doesn't run by stockwork. Its multiplicity of systems drain power and may need recharging from batteries.

Living on cloud nine

CLOUD KINGDOMS

Looking nothing like a small tree, Baron Von Borsalot has stolen Terry's magic crystals and scattered them around the Cloud Kingdoms. Using the magic crystals, the Baron has enslaved Cloud Forces whose only hope happens to be the aforementioned Tel, the incredible bouncing ball man.

After choosing which of the four Cloud Kingdoms he wishes to clear first, Terry jumps in his helicopter and sets off to find the Forces, an effort he presumed will be simple walkovers. Not so. Borsalot has turned the trouble Forces into aggressive insects and giant rolling blackbills (Don't ask how.) Unless the bouncers in safety, those guys will hand out some serious personal damage.

Of course, Tel is up against a time limit: only 98 minutes (plus minutes* four seconds) to complete the quest. The Kingdoms are fairly messy places, with items scattered all over the place. Items, however, can prove pretty useful — so pick 'em up. See repeatable box for details

of what's on offer.

The Kingdoms also have a strange array of obstacles lying about: long flies, magnets, bumpers and disappearing tiles to name but a few. Also, watch your step, as the expedition takes place high in the air. One slip and Terry will fall into the dark void below.

The amount of game to be found on each level is indicated at the bottom of the screen, along with lives, the notorious timer and current score. And not even Arthur Cobby can help you feel if he tells of so many out of minutes. Finally, without wishing to put you off, there are another three levels to go...

Mark Caswell



*Looking more than a night guard? The design Terry sets off around the cloud Kingdoms in a bid to show Baron Von Borsalot that he can't mess with a good boy's helmet and gets away with it.
*Coby Cobby believes in happy when at the prospect of being awarded an impressive score.



LOGOTRON

GAME CLOUD KINGDOMS PRODUCER LOGOTRON

VERSIONS

AMIGA	£24.99
ATARI ST	£24.99
C64	£9.99/£14.99
PC	£29.99

AMIGA

86%

The game kicks off with a boozey, happy little tune. Indeed, the whole game gives this cheery, happy atmosphere that makes you feel like throwing up. Nah, only kidding. *Cloud Kingdoms* is very good, at least it's better than *Starblades*. The graphics are wonderful, with colourful, kind sprites rampaging around some very atrocious mazes. This is a frustrating game, but pleasantly so, thankju.

C64

89%

The atmosphere of the Amiga is definitely lost, as is the difficulty. The usually bloody C64 sprites are surprisingly detailed, but the backdrops are perhaps the most impressive feature. (Though some of the layouts look as if they took their inspiration from elsewhere — arcade and puzzle games, perhaps?) As with the Amiga, a game that is a pleasure to play — even more so in the C64, with improved playability!



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Meanwhile, back at the stadium

TRACK & FIELD II

KONAMI



As with the arcade version, the Nintendo Game Boy field has spawned an equally impressive sequel. There are three modes of play: training (12 events), championship (12) and player versus player (training, Testtounds and arena wrestling).

For the biggest challenge, go for gold in the championship mode, four days, each filled with three main events and two optional (judo/jigoku shooting and kang-gliding). So choose a country to represent and off you go. Oh! Come back! Not off you go home... Wimp!

The first event is fencing, where you must create a fence 100 metres long and hammer in all the nails. Err, no. That's a lie. What you must in fact do is to kick your opponent five times (This all sounds a bit dodgy...*lol*). The second event is the triple jump, probably one of the funniest events to master. With the first event on the first day being the cool, freestyle swim-



It's back to the good old days of games when there had just released their conversion of *Hyperbrawl* — the sky players are back with a vengeance and getting their own! It's not as if it's not good, then, why this isn't a total loss! The Game Boy designers have got over-enthusiastic with their controls and ended in some deep testing holes (don't that *Wrestler*! *Wrestler* on the right!).

GAME TRACK & FIELD II
PRODUCER KONAMI
VERSIONS
NINTENDO £29.99

NINTENDO

91%

There's no getting away from some flingers in the sequel. Graphically and initially the game is great, with some surprisingly detailed sprites running, jumping and performing seemingly impossible acrobatic feats. Sound consists of a pleasant tone, cheering (and sometimes jeering) crowds and spot effects that create a great atmosphere. Two players make the product even closer playable.

ring (choose either front crawl or butterfly).

On the second day, aquatic Greg Lugger's can attack from beneath whilst practising jumping from boards at heights that only lemmings would attempt. After that comes the additive air-gymnastic shooting, which needs a dead eye and steady hand to complete, with the hammer men finishing off the day (and probably some of the crowd if you're not very good at it).

Day three kicks off with the ancient martial art of Kickendo, followed by the pole vault and climbing. The fourth and final day 'shows' off (7) with archery, with the Aardale and Acornfield bar to finish off the championship.

It's tough out there, so have plenty and Lucidate and Malt at the ready to entertain yourself while watching everyone else get exhausted.

Mark Caswell



■ Above: Konami's track & field game is better than anything else out there, but it's not perfect. It's a good thing for equally obvious reasons. It's a good thing for equally obvious reasons. It's a good thing for equally obvious reasons.



In the deep...

MIDWINTER

RAINBIRD

GAME MIDWINTER
PRODUCER RAINBIRD
VERSIONS
AMIGA £29.99
ATARI ST £29.99

ATARI ST

94%

While most agree the holes in the score layer are causing global warming, Rainbow have put their bets on the line (and predicted) a global freeze in the year 2050. Frankly, I know where I'd lay my money.

The big freeze in Midwinter isn't caused by everyone suddenly switching to kinder-co's or saying no to fatburger-inducing foods, but rather to a massive melting into Earth causing a polar shift. The old age causes most of the landmass to disappear, leaving just one main area called Midwinter.

The inhabitants of Midwinter - generally peaceful, low-spirited souls - have been threatened by General Masters and his band of mercenaries. Masters and his men plan to take over the land for their own purposes, but here to thwart their deeds is... drum roll... Captain John Stark, leader of the Free Villages Peace Force.

To counter Midwinter, General Masters and his men must capture and hold the Head Towers. It is up to you as Captain Stark to recruit enough volunteers to fight back. The game begins with Masters having taken over the three radio stations, so you must start your recruitment drive on foot (or rather skis). Visiting the townsfolk increases your forces, but as your travels you'll bump into Masters' goons. They will stop at nothing to threaten your task.

When people are contacted you can send them to find other volunteers (you can control them as well as Stark), but as interaction plays a big part in the game be careful who you send to whom. It's no good sending someone to recruit their own army.

Mark Caswell



So, how do you go about creating a 94% Star Player and generally all-round nifty 8-bit game like Midwinter? We asked Mike Singleton, author of Midwinter, that on page 78.





Can you feel life...

LIFE FORCE

Konami

Eons ago, a hideous creature was spawned in some remote corner of the Universe. It's still alive... The creature's name is Zelos and it has an insatiable craving for galaxies - not the chocolate variety, you understand. But the clusters of stars and planetary bodies that appear as saucers when viewed from a great distance. The theories behind black holes are other nonsense; the reason for the apparent missing bits in space has nothing whatsoever to do with exploding stars. Indeed, nothing could be further from the truth. Black holes, if that's what you must call them, have been created by Zelos' feeding habits.

Devouring galaxies is no way to behave. Something must be done to bring Zelos' table manners up to scratch. An enormous god-slayer is not the answer! Why, of course, there's you...

It's all very well putting on a brave face,

but what do you do when something is the size of numerous galaxies. Zelos is huge. And the only way to kill him is to leave the six terror zones that exist inside his piggyback intergalactic body. That's it, make sure you're in the vicinity of Zelos' next meal. You'll be swallowed whole. Just pray Zelos has brushed his teeth recently, otherwise you're in for a very nasty time.

You pilot the latest in starfighter technology, the *Vic Viper* of the *RoadBritish Space Destroyer* (depending whether you are player one or two). A range of devastating weapons are yours to command, providing you collect them first of course. Destroying certain attacking aliens leaves glowing cubes. Collect the cubes and speed-ups, missiles, apple bases, platonic lasers, options and force fields could be yours.

The terror zones are: Cell Stage 1, Volcanic Stage, The Pyromaniac Stage, Cell Stage 2, Thermal Stage and finally Mechanical City Stage. In each section you will face, along with rampaging aliens, gun turrets, missile bases and many surprises. All very nasty.

End-of-level bad guys like Golem, Crusher, Terror, Intruder, Tutanzenemataak (?), Giga, and Zelos's meat and blood try to make sure you don't get out alive. Can you save the universe from a fate worse than a *Shogun* daily lunch?

Life Force is tough and gets no easier. There are only half a dozen terror zones, but they certainly live up to their names. If you own a Nintendo and love a good space-up, look no further than this game.

Mark Carnell



GAME LIFE FORCE
PRODUCER KONAMI
VERSIONS
NES £29.99

NES

88%

There's nothing to beat a good bit of gratuitous violence. Graphically *Life Force* is excellent. The chunky sprites are very colourful and while round the screen almost faster than the eye can follow. For the first few games, many lives will be lost missing out the countless traps that exist for the unwary. Once the attack patterns have been learnt, however, all hell can be let loose. The wide range of weaponry is very welcome, but it is a bit unwieldy to have to collect so many power up orbs to access them. Oh well, I suppose it shows that I need some more practice, so if you will excuse me...

The Vic Viper - Constructed at a cost of 50 billion Galactic dollars, the *Vic Viper* is the pride of all Galaxies. A pilot can pull 990 G's at warp speed 9 and still feel as if he is lounging in a La-Z-Boy.

The *RoadBritish Space Destroyer* - The people of Latis have always been known for their worldclass engineering skills, and the *RoadBritish Space Destroyer* proves it. In fact, this is the only starship in the galaxy to have beaten the *Vic Viper* in three trials. Race ship, shame about the name.



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ATARI
90's Show

Dink is daring yet again

DRAGON'S ESCAPE FROM SINGE

Mmmm... With this one out. Originally, on the laser disk, there was Dragon's Lair. Then there was Dragon's Lair: Escape from Singe's Castle. Then there was Space Ace. So, how come, as I said Space Ace a few months ago, and now Singe are releasing Singe's Castle? There must be a perfectly reasonable explanation, but I'll be damned if I know. Not that anyone here's complaining. The Amiga version of Escape from Singe's Castle is probably the best 2Dc Bluth game we've ever had the pleasure to play.

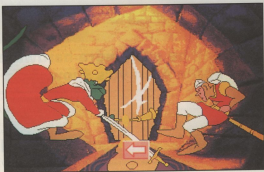
Dink (the Daring?) is back in the dungeons where he must rescue Princess Catherine from the clutches of Singe (the Dragon?) and the deviously evil Sirago Snifles, who rules in the dark catacombs of the castle. And being a videogame, you never know quite where or what he's going to pop up next.

But let's not get too far ahead of our-



■ All that loading screen magic doesn't lead to game to Dink's head — but if that, having Dink won't lead him to the way out through Singe's castle and back again — he may be doubly daring but he'll get twice as scared.

series, the first look upon loading is to scan the pile of options available. These include taking Singe's Castle with its pre-decider and walking on and off the audio, helper and zipper options. Unavailable in Space Ace, the zipper



S LAIR: GE'S CASTLE

READYSOFT/EMPIRE



At the first ring and Singe the dragon stand between Dirk the Hero and his daring quest! Singe, most like Dirk! and his minions Sir Rite Center and Sir Rite's Space Ace, but with his mighty sword fixed on Dirk and not a challenge of sword, he'll have a less troublesome time.

option flicks up pointers to tell you which way to go (but you must be quick). The tipper option, however, repeats some of the screens, but interest than so you never know what's coming next. (in 542K mode some of the options aren't available.) You can also choose the number of lives (from three to a much-needed five) and comp of

three difficulty levels. In easy mode only a small section of the game can be played, as you get better medium difficulty allows you to learn a bit more. (So with full resolution (and a bit of joystick), you can tackle the full game on hard level.

Plenty of obstacles stand between our valiant hero and the warm arms of his lovely



**GAME DRAGON'S LAIR:
ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S
CASTLE**
PRODUCER READYSOFT/
EMPIRE

VERSIONS

AMIGA	E44.95
ATARI ST	E44.95
PC	E44.95

AMIGA

80

Though *Dragon's Lair: Escape from Singe's Castle* is a vast improvement over the previously-released *Dirk* (both creations, it's not not worth, but) — even with all the options. Movement is smooth, with the best animation of the series — some of the expressions on Dirk's face have to be seen to be believed. Sound is a mixture of arcade quality speech and music. (It's hard on one section (Dirk was burning to himself.) A gun chase for anyone who thinks they should have one of the things, and for those who can't get enough it (and if you've a hard drive and 'Mile all the best), neither will be disappointed, but neither will be able to afford the last few back home again.

ing Princess. Like *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace*, the player has only limited control over the character. Disappointing too, amazing robot horses, psychic Mud Men and scary beasts (among others) all vie for the honor of killing Dirk.

Death is also quite an interesting subject, and one that shouldn't be avoided for the first few games. Some of the death sequences are hilarious, and will worth watching over and over again.

Singe's Castle is, unlike *Space Ace* has proved to be, both addictive and long-lasting. This is all due to the number of different options that can be considered in many interesting ways. Indeed, Readysoft claim that no two games will be exactly the same (so mappers can put their graph paper away). The evil *Singe* character takes some time to be the hero of the castle, so you must enough to brave the traps and pitfalls in your attempt to kill him and release Cynthia. (Goodness only knows what Kindred will say!)

Mark Goodall



At the first ring and Singe the dragon stand between Dirk the Hero and his daring quest! Singe, most like Dirk! and his minions Sir Rite Center and Sir Rite's Space Ace, but with his mighty sword fixed on Dirk and not a challenge of sword, he'll have a less troublesome time.

Flip those tiles to form a...

KLAX

Tengen/Domark

The dictionary, according to Domark (and TGM) — *KLAX* is a collection of three tiles of the same color arranged either vertically, horizontally or diagonally. The player (players in 16-bit versions) start the game by choosing one of the three options or either start on either side one with no bonus and three drops per game, save six with a 10000 point bonus and four drops per game, or save 11 with a 20000 bonus and five drops per game. Once started you are faced with a long vertical stretch of play area. At the start, this is empty but it doesn't stay that way for very long.

Different colored tiles flip and over and towards you. You control a flipper upon which five tiles can be balanced at one time, and below the flipper are a row of five tiles. It is into these that you must drop the tiles to create klaxes, move too slowly and the tiles will drop. Depending on the level, you are allowed a certain number of drops, too many and it's end of game. Flanking tiles are wild cards that can be used as any colour tile (useful in panic situations). At

the top of the screen you are informed how many klaxes are needed to complete the level. And, of course, as soon as one is formed the tiles disappear, making way for further construction. Though, be warned, if you let the time fill up it's end of game.

Mark Castwell



KLAX is like nothing you've played before! First...well, except Tetris. Color tiles rotate falling down the screen. It's up to you to arrange drops of a certain colour to be automatically vertically or diagonally. Gray panning along!

GAME KLAX
PRODUCER
TENGEN/DOMARK

VERSIONS

AMIGA	£19.99
ATARI ST	£19.99
CGA	£9.99/£14.99
SPECTRUM	£9.99/£14.99
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ATARI ST

92

This game is so frustrating, the controls are a little tricky to master but patience reaps rewards. Ironically, *Klax* is very good indeed, with different backgrounds for each level. Panic situations are all too common, but a clear head is needed to work out klax patterns. Unlike *Escape from the Planet of the Robot Monsters*, *Klax* isn't instantly playable, it needs patience and very quick reactions. To my mind this is the sort of game that grows on you, and never lets you go.



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AMIGA

80%

A bright, colourful game whose main fault is the lack of detail in some graphics. Scoring's almost in all directions, sprite movement fast, and level design should effects help add pace to the gameplay.

Ecologically friendly washing powder, tankery cartoons, washing-up liquid and hairdryer plus the careful disposal of trolleys are just the beginning for the ever-increasing number of Green people. Gannet, the destruction of the Berlin wall and the release of Nelson Mandela reflect the growing calm and tranquillity spreading across the Earth. In Dyer-07, the new being, humanitarian war even goes as far as eliminating all weapons, conventional and nuclear — all through secretly underground, defence research continued.

Lucky that it did. Without the arms race, world economy was dropped and left the way wide open for some aliens to invade — they'd been ignored by the Earthlings until then (also, the Special Action Committee was hurriedly set up to alleviate the 'problem', linking all computers not under alien control to form the Central Computer. Its purpose was to find a solution to the desperate situation, and its answer was simply to re-establish the arms factories. This was done and new weapons were developed and produced.

But things went from bad to worse and from worse to Paul Daniels. The aliens copied the weapons systems while they were being delivered to laser camps, and then proceeded to use them against their creators, devastating the world, destroying civilization. There seemed no hope for the human race.

But deep underground, those who had continued producing weapons during the Earth's peaceful stage still lived. And amongst them they found Dyer-07, a highly advanced fighter helicopter that represents the pinnacle of human defence technology. He was Commander Morell and must pilot Dyer-07 to strike a blow for humankind and hopefully return the rule of the Earth to man.

The combat chapter is flown over a

horizontally scrolling landscape of islands and sea and you'll meet many types of vehicle, some created by man but all hostile and all deserving a dose of destruction from Dyer's cannon. A force shield allows six collisions before a life is lost and can be recharged by flying over a power force field or landing on land.

Special attention should be given to Walkers, which hold Earth scientists captive. A scientist released from a Walker can be picked up and dropped off at Dyer's



■ From left a city under alien rule, the populated island, peaceful nature leaving the world wide open for invasion. From Dyer-07's last a fully hostilities in tone — and all of the very weapons designed to eliminate the invaders

base to give extra weapons: short shoot (limited re-availability), flame thrower, antiperson (Dyer can transform, jump on and climb under water), quadruple shot, plasma/blast (protected from direct collisions) and missiles.

These weapons can also be added by Battlepod, a vehicle carried by Dyer-07. When the copter is at ground level, you can

explore an island's surface with the Battlepod and destroy all robots you find. Once all robots have been destroyed you can enter an alien control centre, situated in a volcano. The screen scrolls vertically as you make your way down, fighting off more enemies, until the bottom is reached and the level's credits destroyed.

Okay, so the helicopter shoot-'em-up has been seen many a time before and the plot's rather dull and unnecessary (and obviously translated from German). But Dyer-07 is the kind of highly polished blaster we've come to expect from European programmers, and with professional presentation comes plausibility.

Knowing men with a helicopter was a major weakness of Dan Gartin's ancient cousin, Ghepther, and those of us who remember that for back will know how fun that can be. Dyer-07 is a 1985 reme, with mutated ground-based action, courtesy of Battlepod, a smattering of add-on weapons and a vertical section to add variety.

With so many sprites flying round (80% of them at the alien's side), it's far from easy but these helpful scientists, dashing and weapons, relieve some of the mayhem. There's some strategy involved in the using of scientists, whether to spend them on energy or copter or both.

Blue Thunder? Almost! Who needs 'em. Pop into the cockpit of Dyer-07!

Warren Lapworth



■ What strategy largely must be restricted if the human race is not to survive under the alien invaders' rule. Flying miss. The Dyer-07 control interface looks extremely more than most other attempts, in essence both the human race and the 'copter's company, and finally Battlepod to give access to vertically scrolling alien bases

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On the first day Gremlin created mole — six years later there's

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GREMLIN

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SPECTRUM

78

I was a dark, dark night. So very dark, in fact, that even if you were wearing white gloves you'd still be hard pushed to see your hand in front of your face. It was also a hot, humid night and millions pray that Monty Mole was having difficulty sleeping. He's already nipped down stairs 37 times to fetch glasses of lemonade but still doesn't feel cool down.

Waking up, he stood outside next to his swimming pool, a lifetime oasis on his private island, and luxuriated in the light breeze. Gliding into the black sky, he saw what he at first thought was a bright star. But then it moved across the sky and brightened further. It gave it appeared size... it was coming toward him.

Soon it was overhead. It was the size of a small batch of WH Smiths, but didn't stack as wide a range of magazines. Its blinding glow-blinded Monty for Monty he was a mole, thus already had his eyesight and was largely unaffected by the light. Monty could then tell it was a flying saucer. Well, it was big, round and had a flashing neon sign saying 'Flying Saucer' on it, so it seemed a reasonable deduction.

Wiles. Blat gun. Bombs. Silly jumpout and cloak. In addition, there's money, jewels and family items to collect.

Monty has to bound through the Orient, a Kewlike mine, an ice world and the Amazon jungle. He faces rings, monkeys, polar bears, frogs and many other creatures on his travels.

If you've played other Gremlin games, many of the traps in his latest adventure will seem familiar. For instance, platform and ladder networks, bottomless pits, and harmful obstacles make an appearance. Worst of all are the guardians themselves (and no, they aren't) — the most the mole with typewriter. A dragon, giant worm, mutant octopus come and free monster all take some beating.

It's been a long time since Monty last made an appearance — but he's finally back. Perhaps it's just as well. After Moderation, Monty, the last mole platform game before this, was the worst of the series and a great disappointment after Monty On The Run. It makes Impossible look very good.

The bad news is that Impossible isn't as good as Monty OTR, but it does take you



A hatch opened in its side, ramp extended, and a seven-foot tall alien strode purposefully out... and fell into the swimming pool. He swam to the side (along the subtly sloping, it can't be seen) and, grasping himself out, brandishing a fully-looking water-proof laser rifle, the alien who bore a resemblance to a cross between Darth Vader and Mordor with a hairy ear, convinced Monty (with one of said beams) to go on a mission to rid the world of the extremely unpleasant guardians.

In the end, Monty didn't mind being forced into the mission because the alien endowed him with super powers. Mega-

back to the good old days of simple yet highly playable platform and ladder games. Well manoeuvres and pixel-perfect jumps are required, and it's highly irritating to just miss a ledge and plummet into danger. It's this that keeps you playing — you now to get past each troublesome section, you won't let a simple jump beat you. The hints and weapons increase the action and, with the multi-level guardians, variety and toughness of the game.

Although not an outstanding game, Impossible is a fun game that's worth buying out.

Warren Lapworth

This story of the future begins way, way back in the past. When civilization was still in its infancy, man already lived in fear. The cause of their fright was a three-headed beast called Morgul, a creature of fantastic but evil magical power. Not man of old never even saw Morgul; it lived a solitary existence in its own kingdom, hardly ever venturing outside. But its disgusting thoughts from its foul mind leaked out. The fifth escaped into

Turrican's world, devastating peace and breeding fears (as usual to me as though you've been reading Fear for much - Ed).

Forsook, people were paranoid and nervous of their fellow man. They expected things to go wrong, disaster

to happen. They were afraid of what might be hiding in shadows, what could be following them. They imagined things; saw things out of the corner of their eyes, heard heavy footsteps.

But it was sleep they most feared. Sleep, the supposed refuge from all the terrors and worries of life. But also the realm of nightmares. It was almost impossible to determine the horrific dreams from real life. The creatures and events portrayed were so gray, so horrifying, that loneliness - and the sleep and nightmares which would inevitably follow - were dreaded. People would endure sleepless and go to extremes to avoid slumber.

Just as the situation was getting desperate, people's lives falling apart from their irrational fears and hours without rest, a hero came. His name was Dexxon and, with tremendous strength and bravery, he banished Morgul to another dimension, thus restoring calm and order to the human race.

For many centuries, man went busily on, safe in the knowledge that Morgul was gone forever. There were still troubles, still worries, wars, 'natural' disasters. Some still got scared, paranoid and fearful of the unknown. But that was all down to the increasing complications and stressful situations of advancing civilization. It never occurred to anyone that Morgul, trapped though he was, could still reach them.

TURRICAN'S TOOLS

RED P00 — activates three way shot. Upward and downward shots fire at 30 degrees until a second red pod is collected, when the angle changes to 45 degrees.

GREEN P00 — glass lens. Collecting extra green extends the laser.

BLUE P00 — activates lightning beam. **LIGHT BLUE P00** — activates force shield for limited period. During this time you're invulnerable and can damage enemies by touching them.

YELLOW P — restores vitality.

WHITE G — extra grenade.

WHITE W — extra mine.

WHITE V — extra energy line.

GOBY '1-Up' — awards an extra life.

DIAMONDS — when 350 have been collected a continue-play is gained.

The nightmares began again... gradually increasing in frequency and ferocity. For a long time people didn't pay attention, and just shrugged them off. But they had to take note when everyone began suffering the grotesque nightmares and everyone lived in a state of personal tension. There came a point where people confined themselves to their homes, too afraid of what might be waiting to attack from outside.

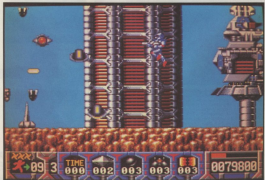


■ Stated platform consisted of Gooby '1-Up' blocks on the ceiling to the first level, left frame. You require one good means putting Turrican through to pass in battle location

If anyone can

TURRICAN

RAINBOW ARTS





■ This winged alien is a pain. The alien that has been through the chambers of a black hole is a real nasty. Morgul is a game of Morgul's and its flying alien.

They relied upon their computer terminals to enter the goods required to keep them alive.

Morgul was back. And this time he was set to dominate the entire world and its population.

Only one man was immune to the three-headed beast's power, only one could stop off the images it created, images that were gradually solidifying, becoming real. He was — he is — Turrican. An international security hunter, a vigilante, a mercenary. Turrican's reputation as an skilled marksman, athlete and overall super-soldier is second-to-none. Only he can defeat Morgul's many minions and then face and destroy the master of nightmares itself.

You are Turrican, of course, and have Morgul's powers and all that imbue them ahead of you. Heavy metal armor covers your entire body and protects you from most normal dangers. However, Morgul's creations are far from ordinary, and collisions with them or with his weaponry will wear down the amount's vitality (yikes! When a reaches zero or if the level's time limit expires, one of an initial three lives is lost).

Despite the hefty armor, you can't leap high into the air and even influence jump direction is minor. Jumping also allows you to take aim at adversaries otherwise out of your steady firing line. Your weapons pack also has lightning flash capabilities. Holding down the activates the steadily lighting beam which may be rotated to any direction.

ALL TYPES OF KATAKIS PROBLEMS

Named Thera and Factor 1 first hit the headlines with Katakis, a futuristic blaster which bore a marked resemblance to (and's R-Type) Katakis because of its similarities to R-Type.

Initially, Activision commissioned Rainbow Arts to re-program some of their R-Type conversions shortly afterwards. Really the C64 version didn't live up to the glory Katakis. Later Activision allowed Rainbow Arts to release Katakis under the new title of Demaris, with certain cosmetic changes made so that it wasn't too close to R-Type. Demaris didn't live up to the original version, but gained a commendable 87% on the Amiga and 87% on the C64 in TGM-01.

You also have the curious ability to shrink down and transform into a gipsy-scope; this can be done three times per life. You can't jump while in this form, but you're invincible and damage anything you run into.

Also in your arsenal are a limited quantity of grenades, mines and energy lines. The former is self-explanatory. Mines are really time bombs, exploding after a short time to destroy all unidentified enemies. Energy lines extend to the height of the screen and fire in pairs — one going left, the other right.

Naturally there are extra weapons and useful items to be collected at regular intervals — most in the form of colored points (see box). The points prove useful, and sometimes essential, in addition to common enemies of varied resistance, there are larger mid- and end-of-level monsters. The latter breed include a gaudy robot and a mutant plant-like. And then there's a certain fire-headed, white-haired of fantastic strength and awesome power, known as Morgul.

Rainbow Arts really knew how to produce top-notch arcade games. Turrican follows (relatively) hot on the heels of that great underwater blaster, R-Out (reviewed in TGM-02) — C64 version elsewhere in this issue). Designed and programmed by Manfred Thera (see programmer profile) and Holger Schmidt of Factor 1, the people who brought you Katakis/Demaris (C64 and Amiga respectively), the title surprise that this is another highly professional and playable game.

Although thankfully not too close to copyright as Katakis, Turrican looks and plays like an accurate conversion of a sophisticated arcade game. The many different weapons readily at hand allow fighting tactics to be varied. The gipsy-scope mode is a curious but original idea and proves very useful — its small dimensions allow you to enter some otherwise inaccessible corridors.

My favourite weapon is the lightning bolt, it has the greatest screen presence and is most fun to use. It allows enemies above or

GAME TURRICAN PRODUCER RAINBOW ARTS

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ATARI ST	£19.99
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C64

94

The legs on the Turrican spide are on the short side, but otherwise it looks very good. The animation is excellent too. Cliff shading is used for some of the background graphics giving a sense, fairness, feel. At the other end of the scale, the alien level is very simple and foreboding — but again, equally good use of colour and tone. Graphical mistakes include thunder and lightning, bubbles, and splash water effects. However, sometimes in parallel, it's very smooth. Sound effects are energetic, music dramatic, and gameplay addictive. A classic old game.

AMIGA

92

Unfortunately not a great improvement over the C64, Turrican being a good but far from outstanding spide. Loading is grating in places. Backgrounds are generally effective and scroll smoothly. Although end-of-level monsters are the stars of the show — big, threatening and nice to look at — the shading on floating mines is excellent, very realistic indeed. Energetic music and atmospheric sound effects add much to the game. The lightning bolt being one of the most dramatic sounds I've heard in a computer game. Although not a particularly impressive Amiga game, it is the best pure arcade blast released for the 16-bit Commodore so far this year.

before you to be killed without you having to enter their firing line — very useful. It's perfect for making different areas for destructive places of safety.

Although the various pods you can collect don't drastically enhance capabilities, they can be a Godsend. 300 diamonds seems like a hell of a lot to collect for a routine play, but you often find many of them grouped together.

Turrican is tough. 1000 screens, 15 levels, five completely different worlds, many diverse Morgul minions, mean

end-of-life quarters... The game offers shoot-'em-up action in a platform game mold (one which requires some very left manoeuvres), mixed with excellent graphics and wide weaponry selection. Turrican is a Nineties arcade game not to be missed.

Markus Lapworth

16—24—36 feet, hart, feet

CYBERBALL

TENGEN/DOMARK

The year is 2022, the last human player in the great game of Gridiron Football has just "retired" (actually he was decapitated by a face-masking violation). Now huge robots 20 feet tall, 8 feet wide and 2000 pounds in weight (about the same as ten dozen human players) carry on the tradition in a game rated for its violence and fast-paced action.

After choosing a side or two player game, you get to select your team. In practice mode you play either the Los Angeles Assassins or New York Endoskies. Or, if you use a hard-core action strategy program, go for Pro mode. The San Francisco Inferno, Chicago Killers, Miami Terminators and Dallas Destroyers are the remainder robots on offer.

The ball appears on the pitch (along with the combatants) and the battle begins. You generally start the game by receiving the ball, thus you are on the offensive. The ball used in American Football codes is often nicknamed a bomb, well here the description is literally true. 350 pounds of steel and high explosives have gone into this game, and as the game progresses the ball gets closer to exploding. The general

rules of American football apply; score a touch-down by carrying the ball across the end zone.

The ball starts off cool, becomes warm, then hot, and finally white-hot. A nasty trick to pull with a critical ball is to throw it at an opposing player (it blows them up, hot). But I'm

getting well ahead of myself. When on the offensive, you are faced with a choice of either running or passing plays. When an offensive choice has been made, you can select one of four formations. The formations include the tactically-named Runmenace, Gun-O-Gun, Passie-Chuzzle and Sneakstance. Each formation has particular strategic values, so if you have some prior knowledge of the game this helps.

A limited amount of attempts are allowed to reach the defense line - that is, before the ball blows. If you fail, you go on the defensive. Here you have the choice to run a short, medium or long defence. (Like the offensive formations, the defensive formations have some wonderful names: Nickle, Ditch, LB Ditch, Standard Run, 3-4 Blitz.

GAME CYBERBALL
PRODUCER
TENGEN/DOMARK
VERSIONS

AMIGA	£19.99
ATARI ST	£19.99
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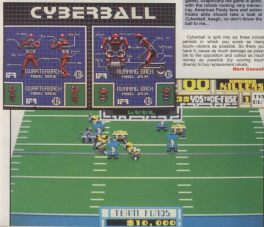
AMIGA

87%

It's handy if you have knowledge of the sport before you start. You see, like me, just pick the offensive and defensive plays willy nilly - but if you understand the strategic elements of each play you have an advantage. Cyberball kicks off with a well-told title tune and some impressive speech (I'd love to meet the woman behind that sexy voice) (yes, but I bet she wouldn't say the same about you - Ed). Sadly in-game audio is limited to muffled speech and sound effects. I'd at least have liked to hear the gruff voice of the Quarterback calling the play (as heard in the coin-op game). Graphically the game is good, with the robots looking very menacing. American Proky fans and action freaks alike should take a look at Cyberball. Alas, no don't show the ball to me...

Cyberball is split into six three minute periods in which you score as many touch-downs as possible. So there you have it; cause as much damage as possible to the opposition and collect as much money as possible (by scoring touch-downs) to buy replacement robots.

Mark Gusswell



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Screen shots represent
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SATURDAY NIGHT

It's the big night in the armchair for the GAPs and a lustycheering mindless freak-out on the terraces for the brownies, but guys with brains make their own soccer thrills on the computer — and there's plenty to be had, as the TGM supporters get the lowdown on the latest soccer releases about to hit your super-charged machines.



MANCHESTER UNITED

Krisalis ■ Atari ST £19.99
■ Amiga £24.99

An options screen presents seven icons. Team Squad displays attributes of active players, while Players Injured lists inactive ones and the number of weeks they'll be out of action. Players Suspended is where naughty and up and simply shows the names and number of weeks their ban remains in force.

To buy a player from Transfers you either pay the asking price for a player, leaving in mind his skill level, or make a bid and hope another club doesn't top it. Selling a player is a matter of highlighting the player's name in your squad list and then accepting or rejecting bids made for him. Training can be used to hone different skills of players, up to four different skills (practised in one week), and Progress Chart simply plots results. Disk Options not only allows statistics to be saved part way through a season, but also allows certain parameters to be altered: match time; language; name of manager; control keys; player names; difficulty level; and game type from full management to pure arcade.

Matches are shown from the time-honoured side view from the stands. Players currently under control are highlighted by a glimmer at their feet and a transparent 'red' display (which can be put off).

The options screen has an unattractive menu, double-headed ledgers will never lack power, although most are animated, in matches the pitch is a boring stripes mass of unsmooth scrolling. The radar is almost square and too small — there's not enough room for the player markers to roll around. Spikes, with unattractive blocky black



Fans of the club will rave, but the title screen's one of the best things to see for amateur soccer fans

outlines, are slow in animation. On the Amiga slight changes of definition and colouring make it mildly more appealing and multiple effects are more sophisticated.

There isn't much wrong with Manchester

United, except that it's all so ordinary. With gameplay lacking excitement and involvement, it's probably enjoyable for United fans, but others should shop around first. **19%.**

Warren Lapworth

A GREAT TEAM...

Manchester United began in 1878 as Newton Heath FC, a group of railway workers led by the Boughey brothers who played during their lunch time. Their pitch belonged to a church who wouldn't allow them to charge spectators; fund-raising activities were organised. A business man, JH Davis, admired their determination and in 1902 set up a consortium to finance their finances. It was then they were renamed Manchester United FC.

Five years later they won the League, thanks to star player (where have I heard that before?) Billy Meredith, and won the FA Cup in the following season. 1910 saw the building of their new ground, Old Trafford Stadium, built next to the Manchester Ship Canal for the sum of £80,000.

Success was lacking until the famous Matt Busby took the reins and built up a formidable squad. United won the league in 1956 and 1957, reaching the FA Cup final and European Cup semi-final. Disaster struck on the way to the next year's European Cup final, the team's plane crashing and killing several of the fans.

Under Busby's leadership they overcame it and later signed up George Best. United suffered another difficult patch when Busby almost died but again found their feet, winning the League and reaching Cup finals on numerous occasions under different managers. Alex Ferguson is the latest leader, himself a success story from Aberdeen, who has made great changes in the team to compensate for the departures of players.

Manchester United, the game, is far less dramatic.

REVIEWS

A screenshot of a soccer game interface. The top portion shows a green soccer field with white lines, including a center circle and a goal line. Several small, stylized player figures are scattered across the field. The bottom portion of the screen features a dark control panel with several icons: a soccer ball, a player figure, a red and white flag, and other smaller, less distinct icons. The overall image quality is low, with visible pixelation and some color distortion.

Not to be confused with Liverpool from Grand Theft Auto, Liverpool FC is the first football game Ocean has released since the great March 1991. So now you can emulate Ian Rush and Kenny Dalglish on the pitch or back the more serious management side. Judging by screen shots, this will be a real winner.

and following on from the World Nations of Europe Amateur International Soccer Super League Manager from Audiogenic, is the guide for parents to use. The young manager of a small fourth division club working their way up to the top by buying and selling players – and playing matches. As well as word strategy games, it contains a very disapproving list of parents and no parental hints. But if you own a copy of *Super Audiogenic International Soccer*, you can win the two games and take part in a tournament. The rewards for success are high, but that and you will be free!

Once billed as World Cup, International Soccer Challenge is a late spring release on AtariStyle. Successor to Atari's top Soccer, great fun and excellent value.



presented solid 3D perspectives, with tiled polygons for pitch and stadium, and the game, it is claimed, contains a high degree of computer intelligence. Out first on the list, with Amiga, PC and C64 in follow:

But in the left out, virgin wilderness the imminent arrival of another action-packed game, with features to include close-up views of goats, free looks, goat looks, corner looks and three ins. You're on a team qualifying for the honor of winning the prestigious goat trophy. And it isn't that easy. Because the skill level increases with each round played. Due in May, World Cup Soccer '92 will be available in 3- and 32-bit at the usual prices.

Managers' manual gives a wide range of options for tactical development and operational control, including the common requirements of players' physical abilities and skill attributes, setting and fixing players' right down to the price payable (fantasy players may request a transfer), staff records, finances, managerial assessment and the season's future bet. The Tactical option helps create (and save) new team formations using a map of the pitch, where you determine the target position of each player when the ball is in any of 12 sectors, as well as for goal kicks and corners. The Bay Three facility enables



The match itself is a slightly altered version of Dave Crane's arcade fiasco game *Rick Ock*, with the action taking place in



I'm confused by my, that Player Manager has been such a waste of precious months of waiting. The inclusions of management and various games work so well that the burden of keeping your resources in the bank and spending the right players to help it in and when in each [in-depth proof] and is very realistic. Management games are a rarity to use, nearly impossible, and the great coaching and better options really pay dividends on the pitch. The match action is an improvement on what Off with players Computer players making for a more skillful game - especially when you're playing in real time.

The classic Off game is easily taking a two-player mode, but compensates with a role-playing system where you control just one player making injury and sending off. Football fans will find this an absolutely essential purchase, but anyone else who appreciates a great arcade game and an in-depth strategy game should enjoy it just as much. And with the long-term interest offered by leagues and map competitions you'll never want to hang up your boots.

PHOTOGRAPH BY J. H. HARRIS



EMILYN HUGHES INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

Atari 800 ■ Atari ST

"Wowwwww! Come on football! Hughes isn't one of the experts on A Question of Sport any more. What a lad he is, what a nerd."

"You're absolutely right, Brian, he's an extraordinary player. Quite remarkable. In fact, he's a mix of two halves... er, well, over to you..."

He really injected a sense of fun into the programme. Even if he did lose most weeks...

Emlyn's football computer games, which first appeared on the Commodore 64, has a great wealth, nay, plethora of options, at accessed from pull-down menus. Skill level, ball speeds, automatic goals, graphics, colour, fixtures, tables, names, individual player skills... the list goes on (and on). Best of all is the number of kicks you can use. Five different directions, three different heights and variable strength for all 15 combinations.

The original C64's option screen's the same, blank white and blue menu list — a nice, clean, professional look in 8-bit, it's too minimal for an ST. The pitch, straightforward looking, sounds wet, and pleasant but hardly staggering sprits move neatly. Sound's a lively tune and a number of highly amusing crowd sounds add a good atmosphere.

The amount of options is fantastic and the number of kicks at hand unlimited. It takes an age to become accustomed to the different directions and heights of kicks, and longer still to master them. But patience has its rewards — the amount of control you can have over the ball is brilliant.

88 %

Warren Lapworth

ITALIA 1990

Code Masters ■ Amiga £4.99 ■ Atari ST £4.99

There's little to choose between the ST and Amiga versions — port-across conversions strike again.

Catching it on the five-a-side 16-bit games and World Cup trends, Code Masters' footy special includes an individually-loaded training section. Solitary or versus another player, kick exercises include pressure, lift and weight lifts, squat thrusts and sit-ups. Double exercises are sprinting, ball control (alone between wares) and penalties, both as shooter and keeper.

Set match length and auto or manual goals then enter a knockout competition against the computer or a second player; alternatively, enter a league with two or

three others to decide who matches the semi-finals.

Though not packed with detail, on-line training is good to look at (if you choose the writer's path) faces, and also the long exaggerated steps, otherwise football match

sprites are clear and well animated too. The training section is handy ground-breaking, but more than you get on many football games. However, you can't save training scores/times to feed into the match program and adjust team performance, which would've involved you in the game more.

The matches themselves are run-of-the-mill and far less game-time excitement. It's great value for these, not especially interested in football but like the occasional kickabout.

77%

Warren Lapworth

PSYCHO SOCCER

LocoSoft ■ Amiga £19.99

Strictly speaking, this isn't a football game. Thus, the basic aim is to run up and down a pitch and score as many goals as possible

perfectly in the right net. However, the real aim is to win no matter what cost.

There's no net. The pitch is littered with pits, barbed wire, mines, electrified wires and other pleasant obstacles. Weapons — guns, knives, hammers, whips and so forth — can be picked up and used to maim or kill opposing players.

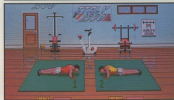
The sprites are colourful and realistically animated on a plain view of the pitch, which scrolls smoothly and swiftly in all directions. A status panel details the player's on-line control with portraits, weapons used, number of deaths, and time and score led. Messages like 'Score points for deactivation' occasionally scroll by in the panel.

A lively synth-pop tune introduces the game while in-game sound effects are suitably OTT screams, grunts and explosions.

Psycho Soccer is a fast, all-action game that leads to endless goal-scoring moments in favour of bloody violence. It's much more fun to sprint around dodging traps and attacking players, particularly in two-player mode, than to juggle around with meekly goalies. A high death count is what makes the game a goody. It all gets a bit tame after a few games, though, and the ball control system is a little awkward. An unusual, exciting product — but one where the novelty doesn't quite last long enough.

66%

Warren Lapworth



Ludlow Castle in game shock!

CASTLE MASTER

Built on the burial ground of Magister, the master of dark magic and dirty deeds, over the years Castle Liberty has become a place feared and reviled by the locals. But now your hero has been grabbed and taken to a high tower. The first task in *Castle Master* is to decide your sex, dependent on your choice the other character will be carried up to the tower to await rescue.

You start at the foot of the drawbridge, armed only with a supply of rocks and courage. The first task is to enter the castle. This is achieved by lobbing a rock at the trigger point just to the left of the drawbridge. Once inside you are faced with the courtyard and the four towers that must be explored (along with the gnomes beneath the castle) to find your fair. As with all the other Princesses these your surroundings are viewed through the character's eyes, with the borders of the screen looking somewhat blurry.

Music. There is a subtle hint here. For instead Prince/Princess enters one of the Princesses' rooms. With not enough and no help in your belt you must explore the Chapel and discover the clues that will lead you to your fair. It is a good thing the clues don't have to see the damage you are doing (ahem). So in the wilderness you contemplate the challenge that is ahead of you. The first problem is how to lower the drawbridge... well working on you have must this far, is lower the bridge you must hit the trigger point with a rock. (Saves)



MASTER

INCENTIVE/DOMARK



■ In the top-right corner, the text of an action is followed by a large flying picture. (It's in this action where it says "You've died! You can't kill it, but watch the magic tree (above). It's the simplest the game is a difficult one. It's an old trick in the industry, the dragon, or even the sword. The thing is to realize, you won't get a simple ending of the dragon (right).

The bottom of the screen shows your character's strength. (This is kept up by eating food) and a rack upon which keys are hung (these are needed to get through locked doors). A spirit level shows how many spoons are around (the higher the level the better your chances of survival) and a message window keeps you in touch with your surroundings. There are three modes of movement: crawl, walk and run. These are accessed by clicking the pointer on the circular window to the left of the screen. As you move around, exploring the castle,



objects may present themselves for collection. Food (in the guise of stones), keys, gems, etc. can either help or hinder you. Let's face it, though, you'll need all the help you can get.

Mark Goodall



REVIEWS

GAME CASTLE MASTER

PRODUCER

INCENTIVE/DOMARK

VERSIONS

AMIGA £24.99

ATARI ST £24.99

C64 £9.99/£14.99

SPECTRUM £9.99/£14.99

GPC £9.99/£14.99

AMIGA

92%

They've done it again. Incentive claim that Castle Master has been over a year in development, and it shows. Some of the earlier incentive offerings were sluggish in movement, Castle Master isn't the other hand but whereas control, the graphical detail is, in always, brilliant. The title tune is a hauntingly atmospheric piece that sets the scene perfectly. Although, you do have the choice to swap the in-game tone with the sound effects that are just as good. In short, fans of Delta, Dark Side and Total Eclipse will love this.

ATARI ST

92%

Castle Master is as good-looking and fast as its 16-bit cousin. The graphics are tough, and even less will be damaged for a while. But with a bit of patience you will be able to move deeper into the maze of rooms.

C64

90%

The 64 version is just as atmospheric as the 16-bit games, perhaps more so because shading has been put to good use (making the 'solid' objects look even more solid). The layout on the 64 games is slightly different to the Amiga and ST, because they were written by different people. My only slight note is the sluggish 64 speed, but that's

SPECTRUM

90%

Monochrome graphics which don't detract from the fact that the game is particularly baffling. As with the 64 version, the keyboard layout is at first a bit confusing, but once mastered, movement is easy (there is a joystick option, though it's pretty good too). What is there to say, buy it!

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IVANHOE

OCEAN

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 AMIGA £24.99
 ATARI ST £19.99

ATARI ST

75%



Oh heavens, the longdon is in turmoil... the lord's crop has perished, long hair is out and someone's stolen my hair. Ohh, and Vivian's kidnapped King Richard. The poor guy needs rescuing and I'm not complaining.

As usual you play the hero with a silly name who must brave five peril-filled levels. Level one takes place in the forest. Clad in armour and sporting a sword and shield, Ivanhoe must hack and slash his way through the likes of giants, vultures, and-eating dandelions (what, you mean Warren is featured in the game? - Ely) and stick-brandishing thugs.

Throughout the game power-ups are to be found. These supply you with extra energy, a flaming shield or two shadow Ivanhoes. Some attackers only take a couple of swipes to kill. Others have energy

bars that must be whittled down. You must reach the relative safety of the end of the level to qualify for an, er... end-of-round bonus and the chance to earn a bonus life.

The bonus round takes place in a cave with your opponent at one end and you at the other. More often than not your opponent is huge and built like a freight train. Deal him and you get an extra life.

Level two, last, the second level takes you on a yo, ho, ho and a raft of buxom excursion on a giant ship. A motley bunch of pirates attack with everything from knives to hand bombs. For some strange reason some of the pirates do Texan impressions.

The third scene takes place on horse back. As you gallop along you must jump over obstacles while destroying nefarious attackers. Level four takes place in an unnamed town. The guys from the first

The first thing that strikes you upon loading the game is the graphics. Great detail has gone into both the character and background sprites, but when you discover that the graphics artist is the guy who worked on the Asterix The Gaul movie you'll understand why Ivanhoe has such a campy look. Round, on the other hand, is initially pleasant, but quickly grates. But as pretty as the game is, the visuals can't hide the lack of playability. Apart from a few unimpressive extra weapons, Ivanhoe has only his sword to swipe at the numerous bad guys. Pretty graphics make it not a good game.

level are back, so you get to tackle even more axemen, archers and pole twingers. The fifth and final level focuses the castle in which the king is held captive.

Mark Caswell



**GAME GUNBOAT
PRODUCER ACCOLADE
VERSIONS**

AMIGA	\$29.99
ATARI ST	\$29.99
C64	\$9.99/\$19.99
PC	\$29.99

PC

81

Prepare to seal off and enter some of the hottest action that you are likely to experience in a game. Graphically *Gunboat* contains some really nice (and realistic) touches. Such as both the PBR and guns having to be powered up before use, the safety switches which have to be taken off the guns before they can fire, and in night missions the spotlights which must be switched on (though this does make you a sitting duck). All three graphics modes are supported, with beautiful VGA, and the game is very playable in all. *Gunboat* also supports the Handy 3-Voice, GMS, AudioB and Roland MT-32 soundboards for added realism.



We had *The Lost Patrol* a couple of months back, so you should be well prepared for the water warfare of *Gunboat*. Upon loading, you have two choices, practice (playing of guns) or go on a mission. Your main aim is to rise in the ranks by completing a number of these missions.

As in the real world, your PBR (patrol boat river) contains four crew members: a pilot, the bow gunner, the engine/midship gunner and the stern gunner. The commanding officer will offer you a mission in one of three areas: Vietnam, Columbia or

mand of the other three. Although it follows orders unquestioningly, its gunnery leaves a lot to be desired. In times of quiet (there are very few of them) the best place is in the pilot's seat. However, when things hot up, leap into one of the gunner seats and let rip.

This mission can end in three ways: successful completion, the death of all crew members, or you becoming totally bored and going to the cinema to watch the latest Vietnam war movie — I doubt you'll ever encounter the latter.

Mark Carroll

In the navy, you can sail the seven seas

GUNBOAT

ACCOLADE

the Panama Canal Zone. Though, your rank determines the area you are sent to, so the first few missions are based in Vietnam. Once a mission brief has been chosen it only remains to arm your PBR with the relevant weapons.

While you move around the boat, monitoring each point, the computer takes com-



■ We're all sea-sick! Right captain, when you down to sea level you can see the sea. How disorientated you do this with a life in the water more thought you said this way to describe pain — OR attempt a prize of other sailors — extra dramatic sentences aren't included



Key in name, F1 views Personnel Files

SHORTS

DOUBLE DRIBBLE

Nintendo ■ NES ■ \$29.99

Nintendo claim this to be the first five-on-five full court home basketball game, and I for one am not going to argue. You must decide between one and two player modes, the time limit per period (there are four periods per game), teams (Boston, Los Angeles, New York and Chicago) and finally the difficulty level (1 to 5). How my knowledge of basketball gives me further than the Harlem Globetrotters (and the first one to whistle "Sweet Georgia Brown" gets trumped), but even I know that to win a game you have to score baskets!

There are three ways of doing this. First there's the bog standard two-point throw from within the boundary. Next, if you want to show off, there's a slam dunk (turning up to the basket and athletically flailing the ball) for two points. And finally, there's an out-of-boundary throw which earns you three points. So into those lists and hit those baskets.

Double Dribble is a good way to align yourself with one of America's biggest and best sports. Graphically the game is a little disappointing, the colors are colorful, but they lack detail. Though sound is a mixture of jingles and sport effects, they blend together nicely to create



the right atmosphere. Recommended to fans of the sport.

MC
Machine rating: 75%

MINDROLL

Thalamus/Epyx ■ Amiga ■

This was originally called Quader (QUAD for the ultimate 3D clarity) and was released for the Commodore 64 on the Thalamus label. American companies tend to change the name of products when they

have gained the marketing/conversion rights.

The game is unchanged. You guide a ball through ten different planes, working against a time limit and often with a limited number of jumps. The planes test joystick skills and intelligence with a combination of maze, reaction and switching games.

For some strange reason, Epyx have decided to completely change the graphical style, from high-tech to tropical. The result is quite nice, lots of picturesque columns and motifs. Worst of all is the ball itself, which is now an eyeball which rotates in a highly irritating manner when not being controlled. Sound is adequate and scrolling juddery.

Quader was the worst of Thalamus' (Parasol) three Thalamus games and is now showing its age (it was originally reviewed in TGM002). Unfortunately in its 16-bit incarnation the game is not going to set the World alight.

WL
Machine update: 75%

COBRA TRIANGLE

Piers/Ultramate ■ NES ■ \$29.99

You control a lightly modified Cobra. Class sword lord. Your mission is to battle your way through 20 stages filled with more challenges than you could shake an Amstel Kix at. There are (in no particular order), race to the finish, collect the pots, dispose of mines, beat the monster, guard the people, reach the finish, jump the

waterfall and shoot the targets. Okay, I know that doesn't constitute 20 levels, but those eight appear in every combination.

As you battle your way through each section, you are allotted an energy level (shown in the instrument panel). As you make contact with hard objects (that is, other craft, live tanks and so on) this drops dramatically. You can collect power-up pods to gain turbo speed, increased firepower, increased speed, missiles and a time limit.

You can tell that Cobra Triangle comes from the people that brought you MC Pro-Arm because the same graphical style is in evidence. There are only eight levels of play, but every one is tougher than the last. Perhaps the most frustrating is the jump-the-waterfall section, but patience reaps rewards (as always).

MC
Machine rating: 80%



WAYNE GRETZKY HOCKEY

Bethesda Softworks ■ Atari
ST ■ £19.99

A considerably more polished product than the C64 original, but still a pretty good piece of software considering the upgrade from eight to 16 bits. The options screen is easy to use, but very bland and the hockey pitch is little more than a solid open space. Player sprites move well, but are small and lack in detail. Local thrills, thrills and arena means this is one to annoy the neighbours. Disk access is slow and frequent and, along with very unrealistic, sports, what would be best is great game for hockey fans (and I really like it). Scoreline.

WL
Machine update: 70%

X-OUT**Rainbow Arts ■ Commodore 64 ■ £8.99 case, £14.95 disk**

Originally reviewed: TGM827

The sharp graphics of the Amiga original helped the game along tremendously. So it's no surprise that this game is far less remarkable on 8-bit. Good use has been made of the C64's colour and resolution. Sound takes inspiration from Pac-Man, but unfortunately playability is a few notches below that of the classic Mameford game.

WL**Machine update: 70%****FIENDISH FREDDY'S BIG TOP O' FUN****Mindscape ■ Amstrad GPC ■ £9.99 case, £14.99 disk**

Originally reviewed: TGM827

Although a touch on the hokey side, graphics are well defined and animated smoothly by Music in play but missing after a while. Loading, whether from disk or tape, is slow. Some sequences from the original Amiga version are missing, but the essence of the game remains true, and that means high playability and plenty of fun.

WL**Machine update: 82%****FRED****Ubi Soft ■ Amiga ■ £34.99**

Originally reviewed: TGM829

Virtually identical to the ST version except for a slightly larger playing area. Some great dwarf sprites, but boring background and first graphics. Silly sounds and outdated gameplay.

WL**Machine update: 67%****MEGA MAN****Capcom ■ NES ■ £39.99**

It was the brilliant Dr Wright who created the futuristic robots that were used to perform everyday tasks. Mega Man was his first triumph. Along with his assistant, Dr Wily, Wright created another six: Cutman, Iceman, Gunman, Burnman, Flashman and Elecman. Unfortunately Dr Wily turned out to be a complete fool and reprogrammed the supposedly docile domestic robots into vicious rebellious robots. Why new controls the machine robots and plans to take over the World.

You control the amiable Mega Man and must defeat Wily's attempts.

Each of the machine robots resides in different terrain. Iceman, for instance, inhabits icy wastes while Fireman dwells in the smoky depths of hell. To reach Wily you must first tackle his minions. Mega Man is armed only with a laser gun, but by shooting certain of the creatures (both enemy top-ups and weapon power-ups can be collected. Once one of the robots has been beaten, you are given a more powerful weapon and moved onto the next battle ground.

Mega Man is great; in very tough opponents stand between you and success (well even if you count Dr Wily). Deeply and gloriously Mega Man is

**ATOMIX****Thalion ■ Amiga ■ £19.99**

Which everyday substance does HURM-NO represent? Easy: water — H is O (and — O).

Coincidentally, H2O is the first chemical formula that must be assembled in Atomix. In each level, the different parts of a formula are spread around an angular, maze-like arena. Using a cursor, the elements have to be shifted around and connected to each other in the correct order. This isn't as easy as it sounds because, once set in motion,

the elements don't stop until they hit something and are adverse to changing direction while in motion.

A great picture of Albert Einstein, backed by a moody but plain tune, leads to a very hard leveling game. Concepts are fine and not very detailed.

Atomix's design is an old one. It's already been used in Entertainment International's Leonardo and Laplace's Jinx. The games are fine, but it's all been done before.

WL**Machine rating: 73%****HOT ROD****Activision ■ Spectrum ■ £9.99/£14.99**

See Amiga review

I really don't know why I'm wasting my time reviewing this pile of sludgy slop. The cars are monochromatic; you never know what vehicle is yours, and once you've sorted out which car is which you lose track of the direction it's taking... asghrd! Take my advice, if you buy this, Mr Moll will probably leap out of the packaging screaming 'you need a check up from the neck up'!

MC**Machine rating: 40%****HOT ROD****Activision ■ Amiga ■ £34.99**

Saga have released many top-class computers in the past, but I must admit that this isn't one of my favourites. Not that it's awful, I'd say it's more average than dry. Hot Rod is a top racing racing game in which you strive to come first (or at least break the race). You are stocked a supply of fuel that must last you throughout the race (run out and it's end of game). Supplies can be picked up, but you've got to grab them fast as other competitors have no qualms about pinning a foot beneath your nose.

Other cars aren't your only worries. Obstacles of all sizes try to prevent you reaching that finishing line. But when you do reach it, you are rewarded with lots of cash and points (bonus). You also move into the parts store. Here bumpers, tyres, fuel and rear engines, and wings are on offer.



very good. The wide variety of backdrops is impressive. Sound consists of an average tune and the occasional sput effects. It's a shame the game has only been released now. Mega Man has been available in the States for over a year. Even Mega Man 2 is out in the US.

MC**Machine rating: 83%**

E-MOTION

US Gold ■ Spectrum ■ £9.99
cas, £14.99 disk

Originally reviewed: TGM218

Because of the monochromatic nature of the sprites, the only way you can distinguish between items is to watch the action. This is annoying. The game in general, however, is fast and very, very playable.

MC

Machine update: 80%



Graphically Hot Rod is very pretty, although the main sprites are blocky. Sound consists of an annoying tune that hurls the mind. This isn't the strongest Sega title that Activision have released, though it isn't the worst either.

MC

Machine ratings: 72%

HOT ROD

Activision ■ Atari ST ■

See Amiga review

Graphically this version of Hot Rod is a dead ringer for the Amiga. The sound is just as annoying. As with the Amiga game, the scrolling screen causes your car to get trapped in the corner - very frustrating.

MC

Machine ratings: 70%

SUPER CARS

Gremlin ■ Atari ST ■ £19.99

Originally reviewed: TGM217

Although not quite as colourful, the wire screens are similar to the pleasing Amiga ones. Actual game graphics are short on colour; the so-called 'super' cars are simply empty title boxes. Music is out-fashioned and irritating, and disk access is slow and unnecessary.

WL

Machine update: 61%

TYPHOON THOMPSON

Broderbund/Danmark ■ Amiga
■ £19.99

Originally reviewed: TGM218

A very special man, Typhoon Thompson, has been given the job of ensuring a child stranded on the sea world of Aquaria. He starts the game by being dumped into his

000000

03



jet-fled by a genetic cop. The child has been captured by amphibian leeches called sea sprites, who live in villages made up from tiny islands. Each village has a central island where a sprite leader guards a magical item that Thompson must collect. To gain the item, Thompson has to capture each sprite in the village. Shooting an island forces a sprite to come out in a flur (a hovering vehicle that can damage Thompson in his sleep). Shooting the flur drops the sprite into the drink, where he can be scooped up into a bag.

Apart from a larger playing area and smaller production on the sky shading, it's virtually identical to the ST original. There aren't many graphics - the screen's mainly full of sea - but what's present is brilliant. The sprites are small, but clearly defined and animated in a rapidly and humorous manner. In fact, little short of amazing considering the size. Sound is close to the ST, but the crude blare effects suit the game perfectly and music is nice and 'Dick'factor.

I'm pleased that Typhoon Thompson has finally reached the Amiga with tentatively

high playability fully intact. The ship's difficult to control but once accustomed to it's a joy, and becomes highly addictive. Fun, original and great value at £19.99 - get it.

WL

Machine update: 80%

MINDROLL

Epyx ■ PC ■ £34.99

See Amiga review

Even EGA can't help the unattractive look of this game; definition is grainy and some bad choices of colour have been made. Scrolling is fine for the PC, but sound is the usual waddy noise. Gameplay is even less exciting when using the keyboard.

WL

Machine ratings: 70%

**CRACKDOWN**

US Gold ■ Commodore 64 ■
£9.99 cas, £14.99 disk

Originally reviewed: TGM228

On the C64, Andy and Lisa are blocky, but they manage to create enough trouble for the attacking drones. By only slight merit is the fact that in a group of drones your character is almost invisible.

MC

Machine update: 87%

CRACKDOWN

US Gold ■ Spectrum ■ £9.99
cas, £14.99 disk

Originally reviewed: TGM218

More colourful sprites abound (no surprise), but the gameplay version is just as playable as the other versions reviewed. In all, Crackdown is excellent.

MC

Machine ratings: 88%



CORKY'S COIN-OPS

The complete guide to everything arcade: reviews, previews, news, tips, charts... There's only one person who could supply such comprehensive coverage; pity we couldn't get him. But fear not, a more than able substitute comes in the (not very small) form of Mark 'Corky' Caswell...

SHADOW DANCER

• Sega

Joe Musashi of *Shinobi* fame is back and this time he's brought his dog, *Shadow Dancer* is a tale of ninjas, magic, shrunken stars and hospital treatment. It sounds weird, and it is.

Your humble city has been taken over by a group of terrorists. They have already struck elsewhere in the world and their tactics are well known. The kind of criminals have played time bombs throughout Metropolis which are set to go off within 24 hours. As a caring citizen, Joe and Fang the Wonder Mutl must seek out the time bombs and disarm them.

There are four areas in the city, each with 15 districts, all inhabited by thugs from street gangs, animals and the homeless. The first section places Joe and Fang in an airport terminal. Armed with a samurai sword, shrunken stars and a limited supply of ninja magic, you must both progress along the screen beating up everything in sight, attacking enemy knives, swords and guns, and make your time to introduce themselves. Get out there and kick ass.

While the sword and stars are useful, it won't stop the guys who call you from behind. Leave these to the Wonder Mutl, gun and protect yourself. Of course, the ship's own onboard security system has to be taken out too. It thinks you're the intruder.

As you blast through the corridors of the ship, you find scattered about extra weapons. (Could come in useful.) The action is certainly fast and furious, with attacks often coming from behind as well as the sides. It's a just as well the player's knob hands are well for total control over the man. With excellent sound (there's a great pounding soundtrack) I would highly recommend *Search and Rescue*.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

• SNK

Into the depths of space an exploration ship disappears. Back on Earth, they receive a last ditch message from the astronomical vessel. There's no time to waste. As a tough, rough and ready-to-go agent, you are sent out to investigate and report. Where are they? Why are they there? Who's with them...?

When you reach the last you find it physically intact but completely devoid of humans (human stations, that is). There are some deformed creatures, but they couldn't be your ones, could they? No time in ask questions, just whip out your machine

gun and protect yourself. Of course, the ship's own onboard security system has to be taken out too. It thinks you're the intruder.

As you blast through the corridors of the ship, you find scattered about extra weapons. (Could come in useful.) The action is certainly fast and furious, with attacks often coming from behind as well as the sides. It's a just as well the player's knob hands are well for total control over the man. With excellent sound (there's a great pounding soundtrack) I would highly recommend *Search and Rescue*.

PANG

• Mitchell Corp

Fang has a big problem. He is trapped on a world where large bouncing bullets threaten to squash him flat. It's a hard life in the big city, so choose the city you want to start in and get jumping. Shooting the bouncers may reduce the size of some of them, but it also takes their quantity. One more blow from your cluster and they'll be gone forever, only to reveal bonus objects. These range from improved weaponry and bombs to life clocks that freeze the tube in their tracks.

The well growing and impressive sound, combined with compelling gameplay, create a superb hit for the arcade.

HOT SLOTS FOR APRIL

- FINAL FIGHT
- BRAVE BASTARDS
- SO
- EGG RUN
- WORLD CLIP
- MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE
- WAPOR TRAIL
- PUNK
- SHADOW DANCER
- OPERATION THUNDERBOLT



Joe Musashi is sent into the city to find the terrorists. They're in the station operating the night line of *Search and Rescue* is otherwise a great slot game.

BEAST BUSTERS

● SNK

Lucking like something out of a George A. Romero zombie film, SNK's *Beast Busters* is yet another Operation Wolf clone.

People have been disappearing recently under mysterious circumstances. And the strange thing is that they're all gone AWOL in the same place. Either our lives belong to Johnny, Sammy and Paul (sounds like Big Furr). They enter a city full of zombies. (Sounds even more like Big Furr). Not just human ones: devil dogs, zombies and evil birds (among others). Try to make you join them in the land of the undead.

Like Wolf, the cabinet features a teller-machine gun, with the display panel showing grenades, bullets and ammo. The latter can be increased by picking up extra goodies which float coast the screen about you kill a beastie.

There are three types of grenade available. The normal explosive type, electric grenades that create a spectacular lightning display, and rocket-powered ones that destroy everything (or goooch). The summation of a level means confrontation with either a large zombie or numerous small floggers.

Summing up, *Op Wolf* all over again. But, then again, Wolf's not a bad thing is it? Keep an eye out for *Beast Busters*.



■ Here is the underground zombie attack. *Beast Busters* is the latest SNK cabinet that uses both the a little to the classic Operation Wolf. Just the cabinet itself, for which the screen.

ALIENS

● Konami

It all started when the interstellar tug *Nostromo* received a mysterious message from an alien presence, possibly stranded on a planet known only as LV-426. They investigated and found a strange bio-mechanical creature who killed all aboard except intercom officer Ellen Ripley.

Now, 57 years later, LV-426 has been named *Acherson* and is a colony base from established there. Ripley has been found in the shallowed remains of her rescue pod and upon recovery from her long hypersleep she is asked to accompany a Space Marine investigation to find out why Earth has lost contact with its colonial subject.

When you land, you find a young scout. Next, the last remaining human on *Acherson*. After spending many hours rescuing her, Ripley is told that you by the signs, his time is nearly, you must find out and find the young ripper.

Though not 100% accurate to the film — some elements have been implemented to increase gameplay — *Aliens* is still as cool as the James Cameron film. As Ripley sails

BIGGER AND BETTER

Down conversions are big business nowadays. Any software house will tell you, one-up licenses are an integral part of their publishing strategy. You'll check out the coin-op conversion scene for early 1990.

US GOLD

Successful with games like *Spider, Ghosts 'n' Goblins* and *Turbo Out Run* three made the Birmingham-based software house even more determined to battle it out with the others to gain the big coin-op titles. On the cards for the next few months are *Black Tiger*, *Sega's Outrunners*, Capcom's *Dynasty Wars* and *GV Squadron*.

Despite years of delay, *Black Tiger* looks very nice, but the game itself is still very old. *Dynasty Wars* isn't the life story of the Carringtons. It's an oriental mash-up with evil warriors trying to slash each other's throats (actually, it does sound a bit like *Dynasty*). And in *GV Squadron* three brave agents set out to infiltrate and overthrow a criminal cartel that plans to take over the world.

DOMARK

Domark, who only signed up long ago with Tengen just over a year ago, have proved that almost anyone can produce great coin-op conversions if they make an effort. Witness their recent hits *Millionaire*, *Xybots* and *Hard Driver*. Four more are on their way.

Cyberball is the first, a futuristic golfing game. It'll be quickly followed by *Flukey* from the Planet of the Robot Monsters, like *Xybots* another two-player game, and the Cyberball II seems to be coming on nicely.

Timed to coincide with the release of the arcade game, *Alien* is set for an April

release. Armed with a paddle, the player must catch colored flies as they roll down the screen and then deposit them in a bin. Sounds like a Tetris challenge to me. *STUN Runner*, complete with stunning graphics, has been delayed and is now set for a summer/autumn release.

OCEAN

The Manchester-based company have done well to balance their original product with their film and arcade licenses. 1990 looks like another successful year for the software company that can do so much.

Mad Max Warriors is the story of a single one man battle against crime and destruction in NYC. Also on the cards is *Alien* Reclamation, where one or two be-sheduled rags use their 'credit cards' to obtain extra weaponry on their quest through an enemy stronghold. Another interesting release is *Special Criminal Investigations* (SSA HQ II), more make massive on the crime-riddled streets. One for next Christmas, perhaps?

ACTIVISION

Apart from original titles like *Hammerhead* and *Warhead*, floating Activision are on the brink of releasing six arcade conversions in the next few months.

Due for a March release (on all major formats) are *Mega Sports*, a multi-level cerebral brain-teaser; *Hot Rod*, a rip-roaring racing game; and *Dark Room*, one man's fight in the latest sci-fi horror technology. The other three don't have release dates yet: *Atomic Robo Kid*, a fast action beat-'em-up; *It*, *It* II, an upgraded sequel; and *Dragon Blood*, myths, mayhem, knights and dragons.

Coming to a screen near you soon.



■ With 57 years later, Ripley is back in Konami's yet it's still *Aliens*. Here she is attacked by one of the monster and alien forces, when it appears on the screen it's not around in a full. But Ripley found as Ripley took out there is a really superior result (and it's a *Beast* tag).



around the ship she isn't alone for long. The alien also live up to the best guess they've been getting, and jump on klapley with violence. One Mass from your smart gun soon turns them into alien slabs, with their dripping entrails splashing against the cockpit walls. And if that wasn't violent enough for you, around the ship you'll find more weaponry like three-way firing guns, multi-target guns, missile launchers and flame throwers.

Graphics are impressive, especially the night-vision pictures of the alien which create a sinister atmosphere. One adventure that's well worth entering.

CORKY'S ALL-TIME TOP TEN

For those who may not have all the latest coin-ups at their fingertips (like anyone living in Ludlow)...

Tempest — From the mists of time comes this classic wireframe blast-'em-up.

Operation Wolf/Thunderbolt — Both are violent, and both incredibly addictive.

Robot — The first solid 3-D game released in this country. It looks as good today as it did in 1984.

Golden Axe — Much has been heard of the slash and slash subgame. Computer versions are inevitable.

Aliens — Konami's version of the ace sci-fi sim.

Search and Rescue — Combat has been left with one of our space-age, two-lane volunteers are needed to investigate. Sounds a bit like Aliens.

Afterburner — After the shock of losing your lunch to this game, you are stunned by the slick graphics and pounding soundtrack.

Galaxy Force — Another hydraulic machine that makes sure you're shaken and stirred.

Street Busters — A three-player master similar to Operation Wolf.

Special Criminal Investigations — Chase PCs are now in a new general release.

■ One of its little tricks is about to lose its magic. Its status in its homeland was first told by before the studio makes an big money move the game responsible. It looks rather like London on a Saturday night, but back to business. All-in-all, it's a game that's well worth a look for the latest style "off" games.

VAPOUR TRAIL

• Data East

Vapour Trail makes no pretensions to be anything but a vertically-scrolling UN Squadron — and a rather playable one at that.

Choices from three aircraft — Sligh (fast and agile), Belyon (quick and well-armed) and Valtoria (heavily armed) — and enter the skies to confront just more aggressive.

Once in the air you are up against a wide variety of both airborne and ground-based targets. Enemy planes kick out bullets, helicopters dispatch heat-seeking missiles and even the occasional SAM missile makes sure that you aren't lonely. The obligatory power-ups are thankfully in plentiful supply. Extra weapons are the most common, and some of them are pretty devastating (think goodness).

Some of the attention to detail is quite astounding. One particular sequence sees you attempting the destruction of a huge SAM missile. The longer you take to blast it, the more it comes to life. It does nothing good for the nerves to see and hear the engines starting up.

Nothing intrinsically new here, but quite addictive all the same.

CRUDE BUSTER

• Data East

In the year 2010, a great catastrophe hit New York, nuclear devices of unknown origin detonated most of the city. Twenty years later, details are becoming clear of who perpetrated this foul deed. A crime syndicate calling itself Big Valley is subversively trying to take over the world. The US Government finds no alternative, they call in two guys known in the underworld as the Crude Busters.

Trudging through the remains of NYC, the Busters encounter villains under various guises. They vary from too-foul fat midgets to guys who would make the Hulk look like a chihuahua. And there you are with just your hands and feet.

Occasionally you'll encounter certain Raping Spectra. These can be picked up and swung around in three or four ways. Hitting an attacker displays a PCNT, (PNT) or

UNCORKING S.C.I.

Special Criminal Investigations is one of my favourite coin-up games at the moment. To help struggling criminal investigators, here's the Cork Guide to the game that's sweeping the nation — if you can call Brighton 'the nation'...

■ Instead of continually blasting away with your Cork 44, hold down the fire button for a second or two and then let go. Assuming you will now have automatic fire.

■ Contact with other road users slows you down and takes valuable time. To avoid a crash shoot at approaching vehicles.

■ When approaching the target vehicle it is best to dispose of the subcity first.

■ Never touch a big bubble until the helicopter has dropped a bazooka.

■ On light islands, instead of leaving by shifting from high to low gear quickly.

■ Use bullet blockers only when the target vehicle is in range.

■ Don't get a thing wrong on the final stage. This is the essence.

CLUNK — Just like the old Batman TV show. There's also some great speech interaction with your enemies. Have catch the concrete block, yuff.

Crude Buster is a fun and humorous beat-'em-up that is well worth getting rid of your change on.

FINAL FIGHT

• Capcom

Contrary to what you might think, Final Fight is not the latest boxing game. It is, unfortunately, yet another walk and hit game. And they blame computer game producers for being (un)original. Although each of the player representations — Guy, Cody and Haggar — do have their own fighting style.

The action takes in the city streets with a variety of bad guys appearing from doorways, ends of the hallway, behind potted plants, etc. Some wield weapons, while others try to crush you with their bare hands. You start weaponless, but as you progress, knives, lead pipes, etc appear with which you can attack all and sundry. Once the first section has been cleared it's into the subway to beat up a big fatso and leap aboard a tube train.

Graphically, Final Fight is very impressive: brightly drawn and animated bad guys may beat down, beat out of the hero, but he can give as good as he gets. Highly recommended.

COIN-OP SOLUTIONS

Feeling your coin up? Struggling pieces of hardware? Running over the following?

■ **TOD Games.** Next month we'll be introducing a new section with tricks, tips, hints and solutions to all the top coin-ups.

■ **MSI** has must be an arcade addict. If you are, send in solutions, tips, maps, etc to your favourite coin-up. They'll be posted up for gratis. Send 'em to the usual address, marking your envelope 'Arcade Addict'.

TGM TRICKS & CHEATS

The *Super Shinobi* gets blown wide open and *Shogun 'n' Ghosts*

shouldn't pose anymore problems. Robin Candy sorts through your letters and comes up with the most comprehensive tips section around...

X-Out

Amiga

Here's tips from that ace astronaut, Dennis Goode of Cosmoquest.

Select the smallest ship and the smallest bullet then stick on the alien at the top and you will be rewarded with \$5,000 credits.

Enduro Racer

Sega

Useful tips from David Colles of Carbit.

Reset, then press up, down, left then right. You can now choose which round of the game you wish to begin on.

This *Unsubscribed*

Amiga

Type in SOUTHAMPTON@JETTIE on the title screen. Pressing P-10 will now advance you a level while pressing H&L&P all levels too. Btw, as it will automatically place you halfway through that level. OK!

Type in TECHNIQUE on the title screen. Now when you play the game press P3 for extra time and P7 for renewed energy. While if you pause the game and press the left arrow you advance to the next level.



Gates of Zendacon

Atari Lynx

Levels: YARR, BEEK, SEBB, GHEK, ZACK, BRAT, STON, XTAT, NOTZ, SMAX, ZHSA, APOG, ANOX, NANT, YARR, EYES, MYOK, ZHRS, SARY, BARK, SMAX, SEZZ, JITYK, GRAY, PLAT, HYET, TERA, BITE, BETA, TRAX, ZHNA, POKY, NEDA, NEDU, LUNY, BARK, BODD, STAB, TEAT, POKY, NEDA, TERY, STAN, TRAX, SESS, ZORT.

Quicker levels: HEAR, ZORT, BRAN.

End level: ZETA.

Hidden level: THYX. As soon as the level starts, immediately press down and right. If you do this quick enough you will pass through the floor without crashing. Once under the floor, dodge the obstacles and eventually you will find a gate which will take you to the hidden level.

Batman — The Movie

Amstrad

Well we've had tips for every other format of the game so why not the Amstrad? Gregory Moor from West Cheshire reveals a quick cheat. Thanks, Greg, to skip to the next level just type in 00000 whilst playing the game.

Ninja Warriors

Amiga

Games Column from Rounding has help for all you ninjas. Start the game as usual then press Caps Lock. Now type in CHRG2244 and the screen border will flash. Release Caps Lock and you will have unlimited credits.

Thunder Force II

Sega Mega Drive

Has your choppy got the best of you? Fear not, Philip Lord of Liverpool is totally in control of his. *(Whisper, it was a good joke, even if it was for Thunder Blade!)*

When the title screen appears, press button A and start at the easier level. A new set of menus will now appear allowing you to adjust the game's difficulty etc.

Indiana Jones

The Arcade Game

Atari ST, Amiga

Get yourself onto the high score table and type in 000000 as your name for a continuous continue-opion.

APB

Amiga

From R Mooney in Birmingham.

When the title screen appears, push the joystick forwards and press fire. The game will now start on Day 18.

Blue Lightning

Atari Lynx

Lynx cheats already, I am surprised. Unfortunately I lost part of the letter so I don't know who to thank for the following tips. Anyway, thank you, whoever you are (there can't be many people with Lynx machines out there).

Mission 1 AAAA Destroy enemy aircraft.

Mission 2 IRLAN Destroy land and air targets.

Mission 3 ALFA Engage and destroy enemy command.

Mission 4 BELL Fly through canyon and destroy enemy tanks.

Mission 5 NAME Fly low and knock out all enemy radar installations.

Mission 6 LOCK Deliver documents to hidden aircraft.

Mission 7 HAWK Sink

Hidden radar installations. Mission 8 FLRA Break in at night and avoid detection. Avoid radar.

Mission 9 LIFE Run enemy camp and destroy radar installations, but don't kill friends.



Ghouls 'n' Ghosts

All formats

If things that go bump in the night are troubling you, then fear no longer! **STREETS OF RAMPAGE** UPRITER ACEL person Robin Hood has generously supplied this definitive guide to completing difficult 'n' ghosts.

General tips

Should you lose your armour, look around for a magic shield. Open it and a magic weapon will appear and change you into a duck. Now avoid any ghosts and when you change back into your normal less duck-like self your armour will be restored. Magic is best used in situations, it takes vital seconds to power up and even then it affects you it always has the impressive. The Arrow does is best suited to tackling those bosses which require multiple hits but the best magic is the three-way elemental beam when used with the lance.

Level one

Watch out for skeletal weapons coming up from below and those approaching from just under your line of feet. While progressing through the level, try to avoid staying on top of hills, you're more vulnerable to attack there.

The second chest contains magic armour. Climb onto the roof of the ruins to shoot at the enemies and try to avoid leaping when near the galliard.

In the second hall, climb the hill, jump and run up to the left, jump up again and run to the right, hit the swampy pit, creatures and fall down the cliff.

Walk slowly to the head, shooting first ghouls. Jump up and lay like dead until he's close. Then run away turning around now and then and firing at his head. If you can, get the last two stages and couple it with a suitable potion.

Level two

Run as fast as you can, throw carefully onto the low-bouncing turtle heads, and collect the magic armour from the second chest. Kill any low-flying, winged monsters and jump up onto the catapult platforms.

Run along the first part of the platform (you'll have to move quickly because the platform falls away) and keep over the next hill. Jump onto the next platform and keep jumping. Now leap onto the third platform

then off onto the four between the two sand traps. Jump onto the fourth platform and immediately do a running jump to clear the gap. Keep jumping till you're clear of the fifth and last platform.

Kill the winged demon by standing in the centre of the screen and firing up, but beware of the evil spell. When you notice that the ground graphics have changed, proceed carefully. Waves suddenly start appearing in the ground! Watch out for the peppy fire spots, shoot one if it gets too close. Kill the vengeful batrap with two shots and jump over the fire rashes. Kill the other fly-bat and when you reach the fire wall, shoot like mad at him before he leaps. Jump away from him and start firing again. It takes about 15 shots to kill but don't forget to shoot the falling fire bombs for bonus points.

Level three

Move to the far right of the screen to kill the first scolding knight, to the left for the second and stay in the middle for the third. The green spears are best avoided, especially the stone-dropping ones! The fourth knight is a lot faster, mainly because he comes so soon after the third knight while the fifth knight is right impossible to defeat. Instead, go to the left of the spikes and run over to the right as fast as you can.

As the screen scrolls upward, watch as little time as possible killing enemies. Just keep running and you may get away without loss of armour. You can just about scrape by without hitting the ledge above.

Run along the first 'longer' and wait until the second. As it begins to rise, leap up onto it and run along — being as crucial if you're to land on the platform below. Keep running with the platform and try to jump onto the next 'longer' (ignore the shield, it's not worth it).

Miss the third 'longer' and you may just land on a platform. If so, then quickly leap back to the platform on your left and keep jumping in level following the platform into collision. Make it onto the third 'longer' and again you have to time it so that you fall onto the next platform. Jump onto the fourth 'longer', down onto the last 'longer' and then back onto the ground. Finally, leap over the holes and the continuously of the rotating cloud-eyes.

Level four

The skeletal weapons from level

one make a reappearance, so use the same tactics as before to avoid them. Kill the dragon head by firing rapidly but keep a safe distance. Kill the scolding stone by jumping up and firing from the ledge below (before the dragon head eats).

When you come to the slippery slopes, initially keep to the centre of the screen to avoid falling off and dying. Getting passed the hands is a bit tricky once again being as crucial. Wait until they fly, run up close and fall them. Now jump over the gap.

Once through, take it carefully on the falling platforms. You can't always see where the next platform is so follow these directions. On the first one leap left to the second, then left again, keep right, right, right and right again. On the final platform do an extra large jump right onto the large creature. Kill the maggot heads in left-to-right order by running above them, stepping up, and firing down on them. Any loose maggots obviously need to be shot first.

Level five

There are no platforms to leap between but there's a hairy a demon that needs to be killed — if you don't kill them they'll follow you, firing at the way.

Avoid or kill the winged creatures and climb the ladders. Just beyond the hairless stationary one there are two

platforms. You have to be right up close to them to be able to jump into them. Flaming jumps will be rewarded with death.

After this, climb the ladders, kill the pigs, and collect any useful weapons from the chests. The flame spinning skulls aren't too difficult to avoid, just move in staggered steps between skull spins and you should get to the top. Jump off the platform and then back again to attract the Demon Lord's attention, and just leap up and fire at him after he's fired his salvo of fireballs at you (you don't need to duck).

The two flame-gobbling heads are easy, providing you're quick. Kill the last one before it flies (a random event, so be careful) and then keep your distance to destroy the second head.

Next, open the chest and pick up the magic armour to face the two Demon Lords (a close of magic when using the standard lance wouldn't go very far). The two chests can be instantly disposed of. Once they're dead, just be careful running up the slopes, open the final treasure chest, climb the ladder, and drop down into the final room.

To kill the Fly King it's best to stay under it and fire up (while being very quick to dodge his 'bullet'). You've got to hit his head so it's no use staying on the ledge. After the moment of that, are unsure in your shots or avoid (he's a very accurate shot so try to move about little). Once he's dead you've finished the game. (Well, actually, there's another screen on the Ariga, but Moggie's yet to suss that).

nintendo

corner

I rarely receive so many tips for one console, especially from one reader. All the following Nintendo cheats were supplied by Stephen O'Connell from Stratford.

Metal Gear

For a full inventory of weapons, type in the following code: **R4TC G22G2 G080U UPR22**
HT03E

Punch Out

Try this secret programmer's code: **128 113 0128**. Then hold down the select, A and B buttons at the same time.

Tiger Heli

To continue from where you died press both the A and B buttons simultaneously.

Gunsmoke

When on the title screen press A four times followed by select three times and then right twice. Now press start. You should begin the game with magic weapons.

Life Force

When on the title screen press up twice, down twice, left, right, left, right, B. A then start. You will now have 20 lives to play with. Alternatively repeat this procedure four times for up to 120 lives.

The Super Shinobi

Sega Mega Drive

Time to don those black hachimaki and jump around making silly noises. No? Well, using these tips from David and Dennis, lords of Tokyo Bay you can live out all your ninja fantasies without looking too odd. Here's their guide on how to defeat those mean level guardians.

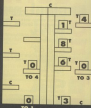
SECTION 1



KEY

- = Door you cannot enter
- 0 = Door you can enter
- C** = Crate

SECTION 2



Round one — Samurai
Walk away, jump, turn around and fire at his head when the samurai slashes at you. It takes approximately ten shots with normal shurikens to destroy him but only four with a power-up.

Round two Shadow Ninja

When he lands on the floor just keep firing at him. Stay close and he won't hit you. As soon as the first yellow shadow disappears you are left with just a silhouette of him. Fire really fast at him and he won't be able to fire back.

SECTION 3



Round four

Robot Car Thrower

This one throws cars and engines at you so you'll have to be very careful. When he looks as if he is going to throw something at you jump onto the nearby pile of rubble. Then as he runs at you jump and somersault over him. When you land shoot him in the head. Continue this process until he's dead. It takes about 15 normal shurikens to destroy him or about eight if you've got a power-up.

SECTION 4

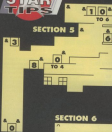


Round three Generator

As soon as you appear on this screen run towards the "engine", jump and somersault onto the back of it. Stay there, avoiding the laser, you can only hit the enemy when the brain opens up. Then roll in two Mega-mage pellets.



SECTION 5



SECTION 6



Round eight New Zed

Only protection and mega-jump magic potions work on this screen. You can't really do anything until New Zed starts to walk his tail. Walk up to him and kick him once. Then quickly walk away. He will then throw his tail at you. You can usually jump over it but sometimes he throws it high in which case duck down. When it returns to his head run back towards him and kick him again. Repeat this process until he's dead. Whilst fighting this bloke, your girlfriend sunk around in a jail panic in the background. What appears to be a wall gradually descends on her. Shoot either of the black boxes on either side of the screen to halt the wall for a short while. If you kill the mega-master before the wall crushes your girlfriend there's a happy ending but if your girlfriend gets flattened then it's all rather sad.

SECTION 8



SECTION 7



Round five — Armoured Truck

Dark down straight away and fire at the red globe, you will have to move now and then to avoid the electricity. If you are hit by an electric bolt your energy is depleted. When you've destroyed the globe (attached to the next one. Jump over it. Then stand beside it. You should be safe from the electric bolts. Now kick the globe until it explodes. The last globe is the hardest to destroy. Stand in the 'DART', jump up and shoot at it while dodging the electric bolts. Each globe needs to be shot 12 times with normal shotguns or six times if you've got a power-up.

Round six — Spider-Man and Batman

By the stage of the game, you should have accumulated enough lives to be able to enter a live. Use a lightning magic potion on Spider-Man and he will be turned straight away into Batman. Otherwise you will have to shoot at him while he is crawling around the top of the screen. Once he has turned into Batman start shooting at the bats. Batman will then disappear off the top of the screen. Get ready to jump. As he comes flying in from the right, side of the screen jump up and shoot at him. Repeat this procedure as he flies in from the left.

Round seven — Dinocor

A quick way of destroying this monster is to throw three or four Mjtn magic potions at him but as this is a waste of lives it should only be used as a last resort.

The forces arranged you should start off by jumping onto the ledge and firing at the monster's head. When he looks as if he is going to spit fire at you jump down. His next burst will be aimed at the ground so jump back up onto the ledge and continue firing at his head. When he gets close enough for you to be able to kick him in the head, jump in and somersault over the top of him. When you land, stand still and wait for him to approach you. When you hear the sound of thunder jump back onto the other side of the screen. Jump back onto the ledge and fire like crazy at his head. Don't worry about him spitting fire at you as you should be out of range. Depending on how quick you fire and how accurate your shots were you may have to repeat the process again. It takes approximately 20 shots with normal shotguns or 10 shots with a power-up to destroy him.

ESO SOFTWARE MUST BE WON!

Back for software? No cash? Well increase the size of your software collection by sending in all your game tips and cheats. Each month the holder of the best set of hints/cheats/walkthroughs wins a £250 software voucher and a free TCM T-shirt, complete with built-in in-car entertainment. Send all your information to: Howard, Helen, Candy's Ticks 'n' Cheats, Ludlow, Shropshire SY7 1JW.

DESIGNS ON DESIGNERS

The excellence of games is no longer in the hands of the programmer. Machines are so powerful these days, that it's easy to write a game that's looks good and is well-implemented. It's no longer up to the programmer to amaze us with the way they've 'pushed the machine to its limits'. Because of this, people now, more than ever, want a decent game; well-designed and original. You don't need to be a number-cruncher to design a good game. Sean Kelly looks at the prospects for potential designers.

Ever thought you could create the perfect game, but are dismayed by the thought of programming the entire, novel mind a computer? Until recently this was a major problem. Unless you had the programming skills to make your game a reality, no software house would be interested.

Even then, to stand a good chance of publication you had to have a pedigree, without a previous gaming record, no-one was interested in your work, but without anyone taking an interest in your work, then you couldn't get a pedigree. Catch 22.

Over the last couple of years, however, computer gaming has changed, and the way in which games are created has also changed. If you've always believed that you've got a perfect idea for a game, and so good you've amassed a number's

thought of it already, then today you are more

likely than ever to have your dream turned into a reality.

More and more

software houses are willing to consider any proposal for a game that comes their way. Adrian Gale of Systems 3 states: 'Yes, and it took all any proposal for a game, although

are willing to invest more money in the average 16-bit project than they would ever have dreamed of doing for even the most prestigious 8-bit product.

The major result of bigger investment and the enhanced technical abilities of the machines is that practically all of the major games for the Amiga and ST are original, innovative and sophisticated. Not for your average ST or Amiga user the dubious presence of clunky licenses like The Head (Glasgow) or Moonwalker. They want more, more graphics, more sound, more complexity and longer life for their £25 investment.



■ Very early sketches for one of the ideas in Morgan's *Whisper*. The top-left and bottom-left of the image show the character's approach to the game. The top-right shows the character's approach to the game. The bottom-right shows the character's approach to the game.

we haven't picked up on any that have arrived in the past year. The idea would have to be very good, and presented in the right manner — the presentation is every bit as important as the idea. We get stuff arriving on bits of paper, obviously ripped out of someone's maths book, and that stuff ends up straight in the bin.' Graham Gaulton, Ian Stewart has already used a proposal from a non-programmer. Founder of the 'New just turned up one day and was quickly turned into a game. He echoes Adrian's views, adding 'You have to remember that we have probably ten game ideas every week, and so it would have to be something really special, something that really made you sit up and look. It would also have to be immediately well presented before it got taken on.'

The advent of 16-bit software has helped the aspiring designer. The bigger profit potential means that the software houses

Morgans, Falcon, Knights of the Crystalball, Sim City and, of course, Popovics are all examples of extremely successful, highly-sophisticated games that are popular because they need these ideas. These are the sort of games that will still be selling months, even years, after their initial release, and it's this kind of game that the software houses are interested in producing. The change in game styles has affected how the games are created. Nigel Brooks, of Smart Egg Software, recently responsible for Ocean's Liverpool football game, takes up the story.

There are probably only 20 or so major projects, games that go across six or seven formats, initiated in any given year. These projects can take anything from eight months to over a year from start to finish. It's difficult enough to predict what will be selling in six months, let alone a year, so it's imperative that projects are kept to



schedule.

Because the projects are much bigger and more sophisticated, different areas will be assigned to different people, each specializing in a particular area. There'll probably be a graphics artist, a coder, a sound effects and musical person, at possibly working on two or three formal missions, and a games designer. The jobs allocated to an individual will be fairly tightly adhered to, because of the tight time schedules of projects, he says. The coder won't want to be stuck with designing the game, or be expected to design a detailed sprite in 15 minutes and solving problems halfway through the schedule.

Kat Jeffery takes it one stage further. Kat is the Software Manager at Images, who are responsible for, amongst other things, the

MindPress's Master Myth explained why they are taking this step.

The American MindPress, based at Baltimore, has had two game designers, Ed Meyer and Arnold Hendrick, for quite some time now. This has had considerable success, and having just established a UK in-house development team, it seemed like the logical progression.

The American designers' job is to come up with good game ideas, and then present the programmers for a particular project with a highly specific brief, indicating exactly what they want, sometimes graphics wise, sometimes in any other way. One of our new games, *Ballistic* (Tycoon), was designed by Ed, and then programmed by someone he briefed. He thought that designing and building a huge railroad network could be the



■ At least one thing will be done when producing a game: (clockwise from top) design, game creation, testing and packaging at play on machines etc.

That's going to be a massive game, it's much larger than that or the *Future II*. I've just started working on a huge vector-based game that I've been designing for quite a while. The design for that ran to 400 pages, straight? 400 pages! It's a big game. Some of it may have to be left out. However, very possibly.

Chris Lister has been designing games for several years now. He now works for 'Twice-London', where a lot of his time is taken up putting game designs together. He explained how he originally got started.

I'd coded a couple of games for Autogenic, on the BBC, while I was a trainee nurse. As a consequence of that I managed to get the 'senior' job at Autogenic, it was there that I learned about design, and I ended up doing a couple of game designs for them.

When Autogenic I moved to Microsoft as a Project Manager. I did a couple of games for them that never got off the drawing board, including a vector role playing game written before Peter Dink's death told the article. When I got involved in the *Interphase* project, which needed someone to push it along, Dean worked on the *Interphase* project for six months, taking it to the highly successful conclusion. He then left Microsoft to help set up 'Twice-London', where a large proportion of his time is taken up with designing games, including the forthcoming *Operation* game *Run for Your Life* October.

So how does Dean go about coming up with a game design? My starting point is often with a handful of games that are, in my opinion, the best games ever written. The first is *Mr Do*, the arcade machine. That has got the ultimate gameplay, simple graphics but incredibly playable, it's perfect. There's so much that any games designer can learn, like difficulty curves, story features, keeping the player busy. I called on about Mr Do for some considerable time before turning to his next creation, *Dungeons Master*. He also mentions *Duke*, *Double Dragon*, *Barbarian*, *Ikkyu*, *Joust*, *Neverwinter*



■ *Midwinter* is all in glory. From high starting to what design takes it a year. *Midwinter* is based on research carried out on the possibilities of a global threat. In this case it involves weather, but I can't say any more. It's a really exciting design, it looks very exciting that it is up and running again.

stunning conversions of R-Type, and programming the forthcoming *Back to the Future* games for Microsoft. He believes that in future the designer will be not just an important member of the team, but the team leader. In his opinion, future games will be predominantly dependent on the emergence of games designers, and he has recently started training employing games designers with no programming skills, just a stock of good game ideas and a determination to succeed.

With the emergence of Compact Disc interactive (CDI) software, there are no longer any real memory constraints, you can have over 500Mb on one disk. There's so much memory to play with, there's absolutely no real limitations, so the games design has to be brilliant, members of teams programming for CDI games will obviously be specialists in one particular field, and someone has to be responsible for putting the teams together, giving a project direction. That task will fall to the games designers.

It's not just the smaller software houses and programming houses that are taking steps in this direction, though. In fact, MindPress, renowned for high quality simulations and games, recently advertised for full-time designers, concerned exclusively with coming up with good game concepts.

been for a great game. He then set about deciding when and where the game would be set, what style of game it would be, and what the aim would be. He then briefed the programmers on the package, and the results should be with us very soon.

A recent addition to the ranks of British designers is Michael Clarke, who has just joined Images as a full-time game designer. I started designing bits and pieces about six years ago, for the *Acad-80000*, and the *CPC*, but nothing that was published. Later I designed *Ilseena* for friends. A while ago I noticed that there was quite a lot happening software wise where I live. So I put a package of about six rough game designs together, and posted out to everyone I could around the house. Images were one of the first people I sent my stuff to, and Kat Jeffery called me up and asked me to come in for a chat. I joined Images a few weeks ago full-time, and have just completed designing the game for Microsoft's *Back to the Future II*.

FROM PAPER TO PACKAGING — HOW TO PUT YOUR IDEA ONTO THE SHELVES

The business life in your approach to a software company. They expect — demand — that you've done some comprehensive background research, and taken time out to check your project's feasibility. Here's a few pointers to help you along the way to magazine requirements.

methods always make a game a lot more interesting, and Atari's before getting the plug for *Top Gun* in March after United is another of those games, like *Intelligence*, that is a blend of strategy and an arcade game. It's difficult to do, but it manages to blend two distinctive styles of gameplay rather than being two games for the price of one. It's great. When I'm designing games I think about all of these, they are, in a way, my mentors."

The next step, having had an idea, is to put pen to paper to do basic design (ah, finally, you need to tell them what the graphic style will be — isometric, 2-D, first-person perspective, whether it's sprites or vectors). Now you

include the game structure — how the levels build up, how many levels there are, what the aim or main level is. It also helps to give an indication of how the joystick or mouse will function. This gives us enough of an impression of how the game will play. It's also good to include some simple stock-up screens created on an art package. It doesn't have to be brilliant, but it does give some idea of what you are aiming at. A picture speaks a thousand words and all that... Within the first couple of pages, people should already have a pretty good mental picture of the game that you are proposing.

Once a game design has been commissioned, then it's time to extend the length of the design text to 20- or 40 pages. By this stage, absolutely no design decisions should be left to the programmer. The whole artificial intelligence thing has to be included at this point, and nothing should be left out. When people play a game, they don't see this, but someone has laid down and worked out what everything conscious will do in any instance. If an insect walks into



Midwinter, one of Maelstrom's forthcoming releases, was thought up by American in-house designer Sid Meier. The job of Maelstrom is to design designs in a code up with plot ideas, and then present the programmer with a complete proposal with a highly specified list. Anything from the writing to the sound must be included in the brief. But though the designing and building a game industry network could turn the dream of a good game...

a wall, then it backs up four character spaces before turning. If it bumps into another insect then it flies off at a different angle and so on. That's all got to be here, and the obvious things are sometimes the hardest.

As a final addendum, Dean also likes to include "notes". Features that can be included if there is time or memory free. These are the types of things that can be included in the game, but that aren't an

integral part of it. If you put these things in the main specification, then something important may be left out to include one of these "decorations", and that would be wrong.

Games designers are here to stay, and will play a large part in shaping the games of the future. Software houses are interested in the work of anyone with an accurate perception of what people will be playing in the future. Remember you've got to feel what is a bit worse than enter the game designing competition in the issue of THE GAMER MACHINE. Even if you aren't successful then, there's still plenty of other opportunities. Back to Smart Egg's Nigel Brooks. One of the best things that could happen from a feature like this is to, in two or three months time, demand games ideas to suddenly start arriving in the post and ending up on my desk. Well, what are you waiting for?



CASE HISTORY: MIDWINTER

These two brief case histories should give you some idea of the part that the game designer plays in the evolution of a game, and the way in which a game moves from scrap paper to the local software emporium.

The original idea for *Midwinter* began in 1988 after Mike Singleton and the other programmers at Maelstrom had written a routine to scroll large sized vector objects around smoothly and fast. One of the objects Mike Singleton designed for a demo to show off this routine was a huge mountain with 80 faces, all programmed by hand. Mike wanted to incorporate the mountain into a game, and set about designing one, which was *Midwinter*. He then put it in with a number of other ideas for games he had, which he then presented to Maelstrom. "I wanted to do something more than just an arcade game. I wanted something like chess, which is fun because you have a number of pieces to move around the board — playing chess with just one game each is bound to be dull boring. Games with Maelstrom, I wanted a game that involved moving a number of characters around, without being any less fun moving all of them."

At this stage, the game proposal was only about two pages long. Detailing how the game would evolve and what would happen. Out of the number of levels Maelstrom presented, the one the one which Maelstrom were really into doing, and so Mike had to come up with a more

specific brief. This was around 10 to 15 fairly heavy GTP's pages in length, concentrating on terrain layout, display, how many characters there would be and how they would interact.

Once this had been given the go ahead, a team of nine or ten (Mike, mathematical genius that he is, couldn't remember exactly how many) programmers set to work on the project. From this point onwards, the project evolved along natural lines, although some changes had to be made. He had planned to have some displays for refueling vehicles, or collecting supplies, but then we realised that once you had made the decision to refuel or collect supplies, there wasn't much else to do. As a consequence we decided these displays would have been pretty pointless.

Of course the project has evolved and changed in other respects, the changes coming about due to machine limitations, expediency or following natural development between Maelstrom and MicroProse's aims, of course, keeping an eye on the project. The project is just about finished now, and should be hitting the shelves any moment.

CASE HISTORY:INTERPHASE

Cyberpunk is gold! Another massive computer game, this time owing more than a little to *Neuromancer* by William Gibson.



■ The bigger profit potential in 3-D games means that software houses are willing to invest more money. The result is bigger investment means more sophisticated and sophisticated games like *Cyberpunk* for the 3D arena.

PART ONE: THE IDEA

Have a stunning idea that no-one has thought of before. This is the most difficult bit. Once you are convinced that you have one, try to figure out why no-one's thought of it before. Look at all the other games that have anything in common with your game. Try to figure why they didn't implement the features you want in yours.

Familiarize yourself with the rudiments of the machine you are designing for. Take into account the fact that the 3D isn't so fast as scrolling. But even the most stunning game on the Specsys, even if it's the best ever, isn't going to sell if it needs a cassette load every other minute.

Think about the sales. If it's just another driving game or level 'em-up, it's going to be sitting on a shelf with ten or 20 similar games. Software houses are interested in games that will not have to share space with another similar title from another producer.

■ *Star City* is an original game concept that will sell because it's the closest thing after the class of business tactics. *Star City* is the only game that will be selling months, even years, after its release — and its 3D and 4D game software houses are very interested in producing it for the console.



Wouldn't it be good to base a computer game around the sort of events in *Neuromancer*, said Simon Knight, having just read the novel. "Yes, lovely," said prototype boss at Microsoft, signalling for a moment that everyone had other more pressing projects to be working on. Practically simultaneously, Adrian Stephenson turned up with some totally brilliant 3-D routines, and no game to put them in. Perfect, said Microsoft, you can do our new Cyberpunk game *Mantidore*. As a consequence, *Mantidore* had a code, a basic idea, and no game design.

Enter Dean Lennox, who had just joined Microsoft as a project manager. "I'll design it," he said, and he did, spending two days of every week for the next six months travelling down to Dorset, where Adrian was doing the coding. Although they had a pretty good idea of what the game they wanted was like, it evolved during the coding period. "You can't have a totally inflexible plan, it must be flexible enough to

evolve. You'll often find that a good idea will come from following what can ultimately be a totally pointless path. The two days would be spent coming up with new ideas, improvements and alterations, and the remaining three would be used by Adrian to implement the modifications. "I know that's a state and everything," says Dean, but he really is an absolute coding genius. "I'd say 'Wouldn't it be good if the tractor beam could pick up this or that,' and then half an hour later he'd have it coded it, and half an hour after that it'd be working perfectly, debugged and all."

Then, Danny Diamond turned up with some designs for objects and characters for a 3-D environment, offering to do the designs for any projects. It just happened that they were perfect for *Mantidore*, so he was brought in on the project, and ended up putting a lot of his own creative input into the game. A lot of the questions that in the game, like the unclogging fog, went all-down to Danny," says Dean.



A game's more saleable if it can go across a number of formats and still retain the playability. (*Star City* and *Race* and *X-Dat* are both good examples of this.) If your game is available on five formats, as well as increasing your royalties five-fold, you've got to increase the profits for the software house five-fold. Software houses are interested in this sort of thing as well!

PART TWO: PRESENTING YOUR IDEA

Every software house I spoke to asked for excellent presentation. Make sure that what you send to the software house is going to give them an accurate impression of your game. Take care to include as many details as possible, without going into waffle.

They'll want to know what machine or machines it's aimed at, who's going to buy it, the number of levels or sections, what a typical game might consist of, and drawings

of screen layouts. If it's something like *Oil Imperium*, where turns are taken along with other computer-generated players, then a flow chart indicating the options and actions of a typical game will help. If you expect a software house to take your idea seriously, then you will have developed it to the stage where around ten or so pages of diagrams and words will be needed to give the details and an accurate idea of how the game will play, look, sound, and feel.

Having done all that, the next thing is to do it all over again. As Ian Stewart at Gamble says, they have ten ideas a week, and the chances of your one idea being good enough to make it are slim. Even the professionals probably only see one idea in ten make it onto the shelves. So, if you send in ten designs, you're ten times more likely to succeed. *Neuromancer* said it was going to be easy, but the potential rewards — fame, money, royalties at the software house's expense — will more than make up for it.

OUR MAN IN Japan

Far, far away, in a distant galaxy their lived a wise old console. The console spread its teachings across all lands, through all cultures and into the homes of all those who would receive him favourably. There were few who refused his didactic teachings — they became outcasts, known as Segas. In the third century, the chief console, Engine, sent out his sidekick, Shintaro Kamegata, with news of his latest creation, and one that could revolutionize the way the Engine was perceived throughout the land...

Today's lesson is taken from Our Man in Japan, Issue 50. And from the east, a bright new star rose over the horizon. It was no ordinary star. Tans, dark, almost grey, with strange oblongness. And so thin, women and children came fainted in their multitudes, playing these wonderful Engines, as they were to become known. But how could this be? From where were these beings gaining their life juice? (For there were no electric sockets in the desert.) (Each possessed not the legendary TV screen, or even a new-fangled monitor, but a strange display made from liquid crystals. And so started the little coming of our first, PG Engine. And the first

believed, I am handheld. Yes, it's totally and utterly true. The PG Engine has become handheld. Not just an ordinary hand-held — it wouldn't be like NEC to play the laws of research and development — but one that can be expanded in two very important ways. Not only is every machine totally compatible with all existing ROM-card software, but each could also have a built-in TV tuner. (Other sockets allow two hands, which to be connected together, and audio output through

headphones.) The tuner could be a real advance in personal entertainment. Just imagine being able to play *Barmed* on the train and then flick to watching *Neighbours* on the same little screen. However, the tuner bit is still a possibility — not even a probability — as NEC have still to set a price. They have said that it won't top £200, which means the TV could have to go. This is mainly due to the fact that it's probably coming out the same time as the Nintendo Super Famicom, which is around £200, too.

ANY MORE ENGINES?

There's still uncertainty about the year this PG Engine. NEC have denied to comment on whether they'll be upgrading the original Engine with 16-bit technology — don't forget, the Super Gravis is only 8-bit. And there's also the matter of the LCD add-on screen for the old Engine. With the advent of the hand-held it seems unlikely that NEC will release this. More's the pity.

Still, don't fret, there's plenty of games to keep you going over the next few months. Take *Afterburner*, for example. In Japan alone, it's the most successful of the game's original arcade, the Sega 8-bit, the Nintendo 8-bit, the X68000 and now that there's producing it. Expect the Engine version within the next few months.

Oh, no, *Silence*, remember Japan's best, well, actually the character's name is Rick, and live time, you control him. The game is another arcade conversion, *Spallat-house*. More graphics, bad guys called *Top-Honey*, *Bottom Dead*, *Green Dead Man*, *Stacy*, *Stacy*, *Hanging Dead*, etc., all appear on April 3 in Japan.

SOMETHING ORIGINAL!

Here's something really original. You're a robot, you put up the screen killing bad monsters. There are extra weapons and power-ups as you go. It comes out early April, it's called *Psycho Chase*.

Bottom: The home of so many things. Here's one now: soccer. In fact it's *Football Soccer* *Hudson Cup 90*. From a total of 10 national teams, Japan being the weakest, play countries from all over the world. This game is radically different from most other games in that up to four players can play at the same time, two people controlling two members of one team and two others controlling two opposition members.

The game of football originated in England way back in... Mah, I'll leave the history lesson for another time. Anyway, prepare for your own World Cup in April.

Right, looked at the Sega Mega Drive version of *Golden Axe* back in Issue 28. One drawback to the Engine version is that it's only available on CD. Great if you've a CD-ROM but not much use to the majority.

Also on the CD-ROM is *Ultra Box*. It's not a game, not a mix of life, but a disc full of bits and pieces. Interesting things like a homepage, little picture puzzles, a small game, a lot of things products and other very useful things. The most interesting item is a foreigner chat-up simulation. Can you chat-up a foreigner with an Engine? At this for only £20. Don't help Japan.

One last game, on the 8-bit Nintendo, is the brilliant *Boulderdash*. Unfortunately, there's no Roadblock! It just won't be the same.

Well, my children, here ends the lesson. But I will return in 30 days to bring forth further tidings of that native world to your west. But for now, Your Man in Japan sends his eternal blessings. Amen and Bonnyday.



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The Games machine GALLERY

Never let it be said that TGM doesn't bow to reader pressure. Early results from the TGM Questionnaire show that you all like graphics features, so that's what you're going to get. This month sees the start of the TGM Gallery. We want to see your artwork in these pages. Of course a straightforward art gallery would be a bit boring so we thought we'd add a new twist...

As well as your main picture we'd like to see several other screens showing the different design stages and techniques used. That way your artwork gets immortalised in these hallowed pages and you help not other readers. And if that wasn't incentive enough, the designer of the month's best screen will receive a £50 software voucher.

To begin with, we only want screens on the Amiga, ST or PC. If all goes well, we'll include 8-bit artwork. Send all your disks to: Advertisement, TGM Gallery, Loftline, Wimpole Street, London N1W 7EA. Send a SAE if you want to see your disks again.

To kick off the column, we invited Macintosh Master Roger Kean to supply some 16-bit designs, and top art critic Brigitte van Heubron to explain why they're not very good...

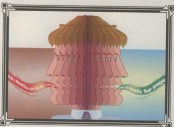
JANUS

Steeping into Roman mythology, Kean has chugged the god Janus, through the ages, into a 20th-century setting. Utilising repeat imagery, a la Marlow pop art, Kean has contrived a startling, yet simple, image. The shirt and tie serve to add a touch down to earth element to the deity. Just as the shirt and tie are products of man's inventiveness, so is Janus. And just as clothes are necessary for our physical well-being, a god is necessary for our spiritual development. They provide us with a reason for us, a focus for our lives. Here Kean is echoing Matisse. The image is essentially saying that "if god did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him."

Here Kean has attempted to tackle the current deep niche of the computer world, 'viruses', the Hermetic maniacs, making viruses, only to strike at critical moments, making us of our data. A pathetic piece for Kean, himself a victim of a computer virus. Health fears grow, shape and form in our fears. And by exploring them for what they really are — lamentable property of a designed programmer's mind — Kean shows us that only by facing up to our fears can we overcome them and move onto better things.



HEALTH SCARE



JANUS



— THE MOUNTAIN —

Here Kusan has mixed it up with the most natural concerns of Green politics. The "Keep Out" sign, more of a question than a statement, raises the issue of whether man can co-exist in harmony with nature or, rather, whether industrial society can.

The irony is that an industrial society is supposed to enrich our lives with its productivity. But isn't it ultimately destructive? Are we not in fact destroying our planet and ourselves? And for what? Such tangential pressures as frozen food, in the foreground stands, then — represented by his brutal inventions, stark piping and crude metallic thing — defiantly in the background Nature with her untroubled peaks. The two contrasts slice each other up like prize-fighters ready for the final showdown.

The man-made road between them suggests that man and his machines are about to march on nature's last reserves, but peering out from behind the mountain a ray of sunshine slaving off the imminent doom, literally a ray of hope. Representing the increased profile of Green politics, the underlying statement of the piece is all bound up with that ray of light, that man must treasure nature for what it is, rather than raping it for its treasures.



Home-produced software is making a comeback. Some of the best, and cheapest, adventures could well be designed by the guy (or gal) next door. Paul Rigby is one of its biggest supporters...

Novelty Corner

Now there's a novelty. Texas, one of America's most well-known computer retail outlets, have launched themselves into the software business. The game is called *Algozoon* or *Austrobit* and follows the classic style of wargame, the look-alike 1991 type. Apparently, Texas were so concerned with the death of new wargame titles that they thought they'd give the genre a bit of a lift. Watch out for a review of the PC version in the near future.

Talking about novelty, American software house, Miss Computing, have produced an interesting game known as *The Fool's Erased*. The plot surrounds a fool who is in search of wisdom. The game includes over 80 puzzles, sub-games, in themselves. The difference being that each puzzle is interwoven into the overall plot which is revealed as you complete each puzzle. I've heard that *The Fool's Erased*, a favourite of ex-Infocom man Steve Merwin, is a tough nut to crack but your hard-earned efforts are well rewarded with a closing four-minute animation sequence. A PC version is winging its way towards us, via carrier pigeon, as you read these words.

General Quarters Software, who hail from sunny California, are a new name to us. Their first product, *Whisper: The Battle That Doomed Japan*, is an operational level simulation for the PC that includes all surface ships from destroyer-escorts (including landmine air wings). The play map stretches from the Japanese mainland to Pearl Harbour. Features include three different types of detection: airborne, visual or radar as well as surface, and sub-sightings. Weather is realistic, aircraft have to fuelled and pre-flighted, and so on.

LARRY LAND

Larry Homfield, the force behind *1991 Adventures* and author of *Magnate Moon and Starship Quest* reviewed in issue 28 has announced that his next release, *Age of Aot*, will have a whopping £50.00 price for the first person to complete it. Anybody who wishes to place an advanced order with Larry should contact him at 49 Harvey Gardens, Charlton, London SE7 8AL.

Have four of the first adventure map on a disk, Syntex, has created my pal. Edited by Sue Medley, the latest issue includes an interview with *Let Sleeping Gods Lie* author, Steven Green, in addition there are reviews, *Adventure Game Toolkit*, *Darkness is Forever*, *Silence is Murder* and *Dead Bird*, hints and tips, solutions and lots of other good stuff. One issue costs £2.00, with a year's sub at £20.00. Interested? Contact Sue Medley, 9 Marston Road, Solihull, West, B37 5LJ.

On the subject of maps, *Inner Fire of Official Secret's Confidential* has just arrived, and a rousing good read it is too. Interviews with Linda Wright and Anita Sinclair, a beginners' guide to adventuring and a look at the new *BLD* game, *Mirroworld*.

This is a good time to mention a letter I received from New Zealand — TGM has infiltrated those countries from the *MSB*. Chang is desperate for comprehensive help on *Steve's Space Quest 1*. What, contact intermediaries at PO Box 847, Auckland 604 (Tel: 0276 608107). They've a £23 hint book for £5.95, which also includes help on many other games.

CONVERSION SWAMP

Swamped by conversions again, Goodness knows where they come from. (Programmers, probably — Ed.) The Amiga version of *Dungeon Master's Assistant: Encounters* from *MSB* has arrived. Used specifically as a number-cruncher for tabletop *AD&D* RPGs, the *DMA* includes over 1500 monsters and characters from *Monster Manuals* one and two. The 57 version of *Origin's Mindwaker* has also appeared. Packed onto three disks *Mindwaker* is 578 complete.

The PC version of Interplay's *Dragon Wars* (1991) is now available. This version really shows what the system can do as it is freed from the shackles of the O4's disk drive. Pity the dragonists are paper-thin, though. *P32's Conflict Europe* has also made it to the PC. My lukewarm reception of this game has grown steadily colder for the PC version where it mixes with the big boys and comes off with a bloody nose.

Finally, a word about two ordering schemes I have been playing on my Amiga. Both are *hit-only*, both are by Jim Macfarlane and both are *Public Domain*. The first is *The Golden Floor* and the other *The Holy Grail*. The files are self-explanatory, but what they don't tell you is the wealth of text, atmosphere and mind-bending puzzles they offer. In fact *The Holy Grail* is for 1991 Amigas only!

The ADVENTURE STRATEGY ROLEPLAY Column

(Don't forget this is a text-only adventure.) The style is very Indianapolis, which is no drawback, but the author's own style is the solid foundation to both games. My examples emerged from TSR Software, PO Box 97, Whitehall, NY 12191 (Tel. 518/336-8882). Both games cost a piffling \$2.50. I wholeheartedly, unreservedly... oh, just buy them!

Right, that's all for this month. I'm off to write a letter to the Editor asking for a pair of long Johns. It's really freezing sitting on the floor of this column. My word processor's cool up and the ten million paper statistics are causing more heat with my laptop — it's like Christmas every day of the year.

PAUL RIGBY, NEWSFIELD, LUSLOW, SHROPSHIRE STY 1/95.

All import games reviewed this month can be obtained from Computer Adventures World, 315 Kensington, Liverpool L7 8ET. Tel. 051 2833026.

PC £24.99, C64 £18.99

PANZER BATTLES

SSG

Panzer Battles is from the Battleground series. Utilising six battles along the Russian front, you play either the German or Russian side. Battles are: Moscow (December 4, 1941), Rostov (May 23, 1942), Prokhorovka (June 12, 1942), Rzhev (September 23, 1942) and Koron (February 18, 1944). Each scenario has a range of suggested variants to extend gameplay even further.

The Battleground system is by no means state of the art, even though it has been constantly upgraded. However, there is still plenty to keep you occupied. Incidentally, any SSG wargamers would do well to try Battleground Axi on 0293 49442 to explore about SSG's own proprietary Plan 5 wargames. No doubt further scenarios for Panzer Battles will be offered in this publication.

STRATEGY 77%

ST £29.95

RINGS OF MEDUSA

Starbyte

You are a prince in search of five rings needed to summon the goddess Medusa who is spreading evil throughout the land with the help of her evil army. Only with Medusa is summoned do you have the chance to defeat her in combat. However, after every ring is found you gain an extra advantage — increased army strength, for

C84

WAR OF THE LANCE

SSG

War of the Lance is SSG's first AD&D wargame. It takes battle to the tabletop books — a rather unique occurrence for a wargame.

The basis of the plot surrounds the attack from the armies of the Queen of Darkness on the lands of Anstoria. All aspects of combat are involved including weapons, dragons and fleets. An additional element is used by both sides via the well-known characters of the books who quest for precious objects which may (or may not) enhance the performance of their respective armies. Each batch of questions can be hampered by the subversive moves of their opponents. It, by some unfortunate chance, one of your questions is captured, you can order the others to rescue them. Questions also help injury or death which may slow down the

group to varying degrees.

I would have liked to have had more control on the questions. Success or failure at finding objects is too random for my liking. Control could also prevent capture or premature death.

It would also have been beneficial to have direct tactical control, especially during those tempting battle close ups. Such control would not be unreasonable in the particular game because you do not play any art-based features, therefore, would not be affected.

Nevertheless, I thoroughly recommend War of the Lance to any wargamer out there and any adventures who may like to get into wargames but are cautious of the game. The inclusion of text screens giving story updates and the wealth of background provided by the TSR Dragon Lance books really helps the atmosphere. Well done, SSG, better please!

STRATEGY 84%

ST: C84

A DARK SKY OVER PARADISE

Interactive Technology, PO Box 146, Sheffield S13 7TY

A curious graphic adventure game this, The Earth is in a bit of trouble. Overcoming ecological disaster and all that. So the plan is to colonise Mars from the Moon headquarters. Here, a rocket base is being constructed. However, money is a big problem. The bit for the colonisation plan threatens to bring the Earth into a massive economic recession. Meanwhile, you have been summoned to the Moonbase. Why? You're no idea. But when you arrive at Moonbase you're quickly made aware of the unstable nature of the society you find yourself in. Confusion, bombings, intrigue and so on.

Dark Sky is a well-presented game with a short, nicely-produced manual and dig-

STRATEGY 44%





**PC \$49.99 (also Amiga)
Import**
GENGHIS KHAN
Korol

Genghis Khan is really two games in one. In the explore mode, *Imperial Conquest*, you can become Genghis, the Mongolian conqueror who is destined to unite the Mongols as Genghis Khan. The game then switches to the World Conquest mode which can be played with one to four players. Other notable characters include Richard I (England), Alcock II (Byzantine Empire) and Minamoto Yoritomo (Japan).

Using a similar design to *Knights*, previous releases, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (a game well received in the Columns), *Genghis Khan* improves further on. All command decisions cost attribute points. Your character has a range of abilities: judgement, leadership, planning, persuasion and so on. When an action is made

which utilizes one of these abilities it reduces the points allocated. When the points fall under a certain level you will be unable to do the action. This means that you will need a fair sprinkling of several abilities before you charge into battle; for example, you could say that this state of the game accurately reflects the pressures of leadership.

Genghis Khan is an excellent product. It's kept me up late more times than I care to mention. The challenge of the game is high as the opponents are no fools. They love to attack when you are at your weakest, opponent tactics are intelligent too. Despite the high price this is unreservedly recommended.

STRATEGY 93%

level graphics for the ST version. The initial gameplay is frustrating as you need to keep a number of timed appointments. However, you will find yourself becoming lost while you desperately map out the area, trying to find the necessary locations. Death and missed appointments will mean that you will need to re-load a few times while you complete your map. Surely a fully detailed map should have been included? In addition, the paper can be quite gaudy and unhelpful. Precise inputs are the order of the day.

The main attract of this game is the plot which is fascinating. The story keeps you guessing and bewildered at times, especially the dream sequence. Even so, there are enough hooks to make you want to press on; it's just a pity that the basic design of the adventure isn't a bit flatter.

Homegrown 72%



PC \$59.95 Import
**STAR SAGA 2
THE CLATHRAN
MENACE**
Masterplay

The second in the planned trilogy (the first was reviewed in September 1989), *Star Saga 2* brings the hero of an absolutely gigantic Clathran space fleet storming through the known universe crushing everything in their path. You're an intergalactic giant, just and you are our only hope. For hidden in those first points is the secret to destroying the Clathrans. To find the secret involves exploring uncharted planets, interacting with alien species, manipulating objects and dodging in a bit of combat.

The *Star Saga* series breaks all the rules. It's a whole new genre of gaming as it uses the first true, customized expert system designed specifically for commercial leisure purposes. It is text-only and playing it can only be described as reading an interactive novel mixed with playing a boardgame, an RPG and a standard adventure and probably a few other things too.

The best games in six character booklets and 14 game text booklets (containing 80,000 paragraphs!). This game is, in a word, *Big*. The story is well-written and atmospheric. There is an excellent interactive system and an economic element incorporating trade. Its only quibble is that the combat (which plays a greater role in this sequel) is too automated by the computer. You do have a variety of options — it's just that I would have liked more.

The author, understandably, argues that greater player control would mean each player hogging the computer for too long. Find out for yourself...

RPG 87%

PC Import
THE SCOOP
Spinnaker

Set in the Thirties, *The Scoop* is a murder mystery, graphic adventure. The story is based on a novel written by members of the London Detection Club (headed by Agatha Christie, no less).

You play a crime reporter set to search for the scoop story which will put your rival newspaper back on its feet. The convenient murder turns out a lady Christy's Treasury, who was found stabbed to death in her bungalow. In fact, you are provided with a front page replica of a *Morning Star* newspaper which includes details of the murder. Missing are the murder weapon and... her husband (sound of dramatic chord). Strange that the *Morning Star* reporter, sent to cover the murder story, has also been found murdered in a phone box. This is where you come in...

There are few problems with *The Scoop*. Criticisms include you having to be at certain locations at the right time to obtain a certain clue or find a certain witness and the time limit which is more of a personal hassle rather than a design fault. However, I enjoyed this game and recommend it to any mystery fans out there.

ADVENTURE 76%



■ *Mystery, mystery and suspense are a daily occurrence in a mystery tale but the one takes time and care present the all important scoop!*

PC Import

HIDDEN AGENDA Springboard

Fancy becoming El Presidente of a Banana Republic? Want your chance. Coming in a sturdy box, complete with two manuals, a map and two floppy disks, *Hidden Agenda* sees you having just been swept to power in the pseudo-South American country of Chimera.

From a group of nine politicians, three from each party, you have to pick your ministers. Each character comes with their own biography, and their own definite ideas on how the country should be run.

You begin the game with a three party system and a mandate for a three year term in office. During this time you will receive conflicting advice from your ministers and outside agencies as well as the ordinary people of your troubled country. Throughout your term you will receive countless complaints, advice from everyone who all know better than you, you will be cajoled, threatened, persuaded and will probably go quite mad with the complexity, confusing and frustrating job of being El Presidente. If things get too bad you can easily be subject to a coup, assassination, etc.

Hidden Agenda really is an excellent game, for pure originality if nothing else. The real trick is trying to keep the delicate balance. It is impossible to please everyone all of the time and you will always have someone on your back. The trouble I had getting rid of the Death Squads, for example, it's not as easy as you might think!

STRATEGY

85%

PC £27.50 Import 2400 AD Orion

2400 AD is an Ultima-type game. Interaction is quite basic but essential in completing the game. You will be able to roam the city as well as delve in the underground which is a complex tunnel system set up by the robots.

During the game you will be attacked if you don't check in after a set amount of moves. A bit silly this as you are always put in the same cell, with the same secret panel to help you escape. Then you are off on your merry way again. The items confiscated from you during your arrest can be easily picked up from the storage room where they are always placed. Seems like a waste of time to me.

2400 AD is a big disappointment. The game feels like one of the early Ultimas, giving little challenge with no real puzzles to think over. The plot has promise but the whole system needs a drastic re-write before it can be deemed worthy of sale.

RPG

53%

PC ROM

THE MAGIC CANDLE

Microsoft/MicroProse

My mind often wanders as to how without our regular TGM exclusives, what this month I can reveal that MicroProse have laid their hands on a rather silly RPG from American Impressions, Microsoft. *The Magic Candle* takes an Ultima viewpoint on the world of Dargus. The flame of the magic candle holds captive the evil Deas. Disaster seems inevitable now as the guardians of the candle have disappeared and the candle is burning down. When it is extinguished Deas will take no prisoners. Your team has to find a way to stop the calamity.

I like *The Magic Candle*. Why? Because it implements quite a few of those design philosophies that I hold dear to my respective heart. The 'saving method of back to back is kept down to a bare minimum as the game concentrates upon puzzles, plot and roleplaying, which is what the RPGs are all about, after all. Monster generation is realistic. You'll find a hint to the numbers of monsters. They are only re-generated when a 'New point' enters the area — about every three game months. However, dungeons have a fixed number of monsters. Once they're dead there's no more. Characters are pre-generated, each one has a unique character instead of being a bunch of numbers, which you're created and named Fred or something.

Character teams don't walk around everywhere like a bunch of hoodlums. They have the ability to be split into every section. While in a team you can have two of your team training, others carrying a single weapon for swiftness, in taverns, etc. The list goes on, magic users can wield swords and cast spells.

For goodness sake why hasn't this been done before? Okay, magic users

may not be too skilled at swordsmanship, they'll probably miss more times than they hit. But if they want to carry a sword and wear armour — let them! Weapons and armour are subject to wear and tear, swords have a good tactical edge on it with intelligent characters. This means that a bunch of thick iron will attack only if they're stupid. However, face a bunch of intelligent magic users and they're an effective strategy. Maybe they'll gang up on your strongest character, lead for any second-order characters, etc.

There is a good use of state, and magic can only be learnt from books and the included spells only learn from uninterrupted periods of concentration. Once a spell has been cast it has to be re-learned. Good, the prevents the magic users dominating the game. One or two of those features (there are many more that I've not had a chance to mention) may have been seen in other games but you won't have seen them all in one release, and certainly not as well integrated.

The Magic Candle is not perfect, combat can drag on sometimes. Even so, the high standard of the design has been thought. Besides the highlight to *Candle* is the end sequence which is one of the best, most satisfying end-sequences seen in any RPG so far. This is one of the few commercial RPGs on the market which has been produced by game players for game players, without the disastrous intervention of the privilege brigade. I reckon Microsoft (and MicroProse) have got a winner on their hands. *The Magic Candle* is a quality RPG. I can't wait for the sequel.

RPG

90%

GOLDEN
SCROLL

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LETTUCE PAGE

It's spring! Nurrari! Time to get out in the garden and tend everyone's favourite vegetable — the lettuce. And back here at the office we're tending our lettuce — reader's lettuce! Hah, haw! 'Tis indeed a time to be jolly — and to jolly yourself up why not drop us a line on anything computer-wise that you want to shout about, grumble at, praise or just comment on. If you're picked as the lucky winner you'll get £50 worth of software! The address is: NEWSFIELD, TOM LETTUCE, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1JW.

Test out the mess

Dear Sir
I am writing to inform you of the poor software testing amongst recent games manufacturers.

I paid £25.00 for Fighter Bomber and found three errors. After about four missions, I discovered that the enemy fighters, which are more aggressive on the higher levels, were absolutely mad, missing on kamikaze kills if they could not shoot me down. In my mind, this is absolutely unacceptable as no member pilot (that I know of) is trained to use this method. It is not simply a case of accidental collision — this is deliberate flying straight up my jet's tailpipe. I have written to Aviation regarding this matter and am still waiting for an answer.

Mark Williams, Nyrthridge.

We haven't actually noticed this bug — though enemy fighters often fly incredibly close, giving only a split second for you to shoot them down with your cannon. It could be at this point that you're colliding.

Gook: a gaff?

Dear Sir
I am writing about your review of The Last Patrol in TOMMOR. My specific complaint is the use of the word 'gook' by Mark Caswell. If the game was about South African police attacking black people in the townships, you would not use the term 'nigger', or would you? Such are equally derogatory. I'm sure games such

as this have great value in teaching the horrors of war, but when you reduce it to killing gooks instead of the real name for these people (or Vietnamese) all good intentions are lost and it becomes another Rambo. I hope you will print some kind of apologetic statement. There are many Vietnamese in this country (remember the local people) and I'm sure they would take exception to being referred to as 'gooks'.
Andrew Stanton, Cottingham.

Charles or Gook? were nicknames given to Vietnamese during the war — same as the Gorkhas were given the nickname James in World War II. Considering The Last Patrol is set in the Vietnam war, when the Vietnamese were the enemy of the US Army, we had no problem referring to them in

Going green

Dear TOM
There is not much greenery in the computer industry, is there? I mean the environmental issues which are sweeping the country — are software houses and publishers doing anything to support them? Recycling paper for magazines, or packaging for games maybe a start. Any comments?
Matthew Harrison, Liverpool.

As much as TOM would love to be 100% environmentally friendly, the cost of recycled paper is still prohibitive (and think of the elements that would be needed to clean paper to our requirements). And besides, TOM can't avoid its paper from trees in the rain forests but have spent growing trees in Finland, and currently some trees are being replanted and grown that are required for paper. But in a concerted effort to be slightly greener, the Newspage is now Letteuce — allude! Gook? Gook? Never mind, just think green.

such a way. However, if the network had been made in currently biodegradable you would have a score.

Full o' fun

Dear TOM
What's been your most enjoyable game? I know mine, it was Ali-Ali on the Spectrum. Why? Well, back in the good old days when computers were a New Thing to the home user, nothing quite like them had been seen before. Games such as Ali-Ali, Magic Mirror and Jet Set introduced everybody who saw them. They were instantly addictive and totally playable. Nowadays, computers are no longer new to us. Once the user came to grips with the full menu, he/she wanted bigger and better — enter the 16-bit machines.

The point I'm trying to make is that something new always draws our attention. However, through time, people start to look elsewhere for their kicks, I personally have owned a Spectrum and C64, and presently own an Amiga. While waiting a Spectrum I would play virtually any game, on the C64

Mega driven round the bend

Dear TOM
Recently I purchased a Mega Drive from Iceland. Technical Review for £25.00. Probably the main reason I bought the Mega Drive from Iceland was the claim made in their advert, it claimed that their Mega Drive was the only one in Europe which would be compatible with future UK games. Then, whilst reading last month's TOM, I discovered that none of the Virgin Mastertronic distributed games

would run on imported machines as they're being reconfigured for the UK. A lie, I thought, a mistake, my Mega's compatible with all 16-bit systems on sale now and in the future, or so the advert claimed. But then another magazine backed up the claim with an official statement from Virgin Mastertronic.

Surely the advertising should not have been allowed and companies should have to prove their claims. What do you

think?
Stephen Borman, Manchester.

It's difficult to judge at the moment, as we haven't seen any of Virgin Mastertronic's UK carts to test on pre-imported Mega Drives. However, if you find out Virgin Mastertronic distributed games really don't work, we can see reason why Virgin should not offer you a refund as you bought your Mega Drive on the basis of all UK games being compatible.



Branson's pickle

Dear Sir
After reading in your magazine about Virgin Mastertronic's plans to make the UK-based games (when they arrive) interchangeable with the imported machines, and thus isolate the kids who own these machines, I felt compelled to put printer to paper in the form of an open letter to Mr H Branson.
Chris Harris, Manchester

Dear Mr Branson
I read in this month's The Games Machine of your deplorable plans to make the UK Mega Drive games incompatible with imported Sega Drives!

Do you realise that by taking these steps you will isolate the children (they are the ones who own these things) who already have a Japanese version, or even American Genesis, system.

These imported systems were not brought to Europe by your livelihood, they were brought because we became fed up of waiting for Sega or Virgin Mastertronic to start importing them.

Technology is moving so fast that this type of shrewd property is usually superseded in less than two years after the launch, so why should people wait for Virgin Mastertronic to get off their backs?

You may succeed in splitting the UK into two into two camps, imported and Virgin Mastertronic, but you will be

cutting off your nose to spite your face because the kids with imported units would probably switch only your UK games given the choice! This increases the company's turnover and profits.

Wait a minute, though. On several theories, buying your games could be a mistake! I see that Virgin Mastertronic have recently released Golden Axe on the Sega Drive at £29.95. I bought the Mega Mega Drive version from Hong Kong for less than that. Games will always be available from Japan via Hong Kong long before you release them and they will be cheaper too!

My Japanese Mega Drive was bought for me by a relative from a university called Waseda of Hong Kong and is great internally modified, can be used via SCART, and DOES NOT OVERHEAT! Picture quality is perfect. I had to replace the exterior power pack that was sold because they use 200 volts over there, but other than that, it's perfect. And as for your worry about safety, this has GOT to be a real herring as far as the Mega Drive is concerned.

I believe your tactics are also used when selling insurance, it is called "locking up the house" so that they can email the "house" — frightened people into a course of action that suits the salesperson.

My Sega Mega Drive cost £29.95 plus p.p.p., with an extra £25 outlay. Via, £29.95 H.M.

MUCH WILL YOUR SEGGA MEGA DRIVE COST?
Christopher Morris.

Mr Branson, we await your reply! (Withheld) Overlook! Here it is now — except it's from Nick Alexander who's the Managing Director of Virgin Mastertronic.

We are Sega's distributors in the UK. We do not manufacture other hardware or software over which the design, and it is Sega rather than us who are responsible for determining the prices that we are able to sell at.

All you may know, it has been normal practice for consumer electronic

companies to introduce new products in the Japanese market first, followed by the USA and then Europe. It has also been common practice for consumer electronic equipment to be priced lower in Japan and the USA than in Europe. The Sega for this is not obvious to us as disposable incomes are lower in Europe than in either the USA or Japan. We have discussed this point with Sega on many occasions but they tell us that EEC countries require much higher component and safety specifications than the other countries and that this pushed up their production costs, hence the higher retail prices. The result of all this has been that various companies have started to make significant businesses out of importing equipment from the

Far East and converting it for the European TV systems.

This creates problems for us because we cannot guarantee the hardware or touch for its safety, our use are clear with the problems of incompatibility caused by different hardware specifications in the different countries. But, as the official distributor, we are of course get all the complaints from only purchasers of the group-imported machines.

We placed the advertisement in the press in order to try to explain this situation to the public and defend believe we would have been neglected and to have done so.

We have recently made representations to Sega on the compatibility issue to see if it can be resolved satisfactorily.

Finally, the timing of the launch of the official Mega Drive is again determined by Sega rather than ourselves. We, in fact, wanted to release the Mega Drive in September 1989 but Sega will only start manufacturing European versions this summer, in time for a September 1990 launch.

We understand your frustration and share some of it. We will be passing your letter to Sega so that they too can understand the real world problems that are created by some of the manufacturing policies that they and other Far Eastern companies try to implement in Europe.
Nick Alexander, Managing Director, Virgin Mastertronic.

my choice narrowed down, and with the Amiga I only really play two types of games — puzzle-solving and role-playing. However, shoot-'em-ups, beat-'em-ups and the like simply do not turn me on. Many, many people I know who share the same viewpoint.

To conclude, I think that during the following years, shoot-'em-ups etc will become more unpopular, games which do not will be the puzzle-solving, strategy and RPG types (games requiring a little thinking power have always done well). I feel that games which will do particularly well will be the most original — a good starter for us here is Populous. Only time will tell whether my predictions come true.

Steve Cowie, Gloucestershire.

Also Alex was a damn fine game. As Amiga conversion was anticipated from Russia, but

surely the project has been cancelled. Playability is losing out slightly to the graphics and sound of the PCs, but even so often a game does come along to change up your shelf power — like Risk II and 10-million last issue. Just a couple of the games I think don't get down

the situation's this. With consoles you've only got eight directional movement and a couple of the buttons — with 16-bit machines you've got a whole keyboard. So if you're into adventures or RPGs, or any game with some depth and the 16-bit are better suited. On the

beat-'em-up/sport/action game level they're about equal. So for the time being a 16-bit should serve you better (there's more CPU software support for them than consoles) — though it's always worth keeping a close eye on the console scene.

Best for games?

Dear TGM

There is one very important question these days that never really gets answered. Also, sometimes the PC (Game or Mega Drive better for games than 16-bit ones? This is something that everybody asks but nobody seems able to answer satisfactorily.
Ian Gilroy, Farnham.

LETUCE OF THE MONTH

with Ernest R. Festerhake

MAY: TOM THUMB LETUCE

Seedlings, afternoon lovers. Yee Yee Thumb is a beautiful lettuce — a lot smaller than your average lettuce — but has small white heads and just a few outer leaves. It's just a wonderful head to "see, smell it in and very strange how Harvest 'em any time from May to October.

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Cheers bye!



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